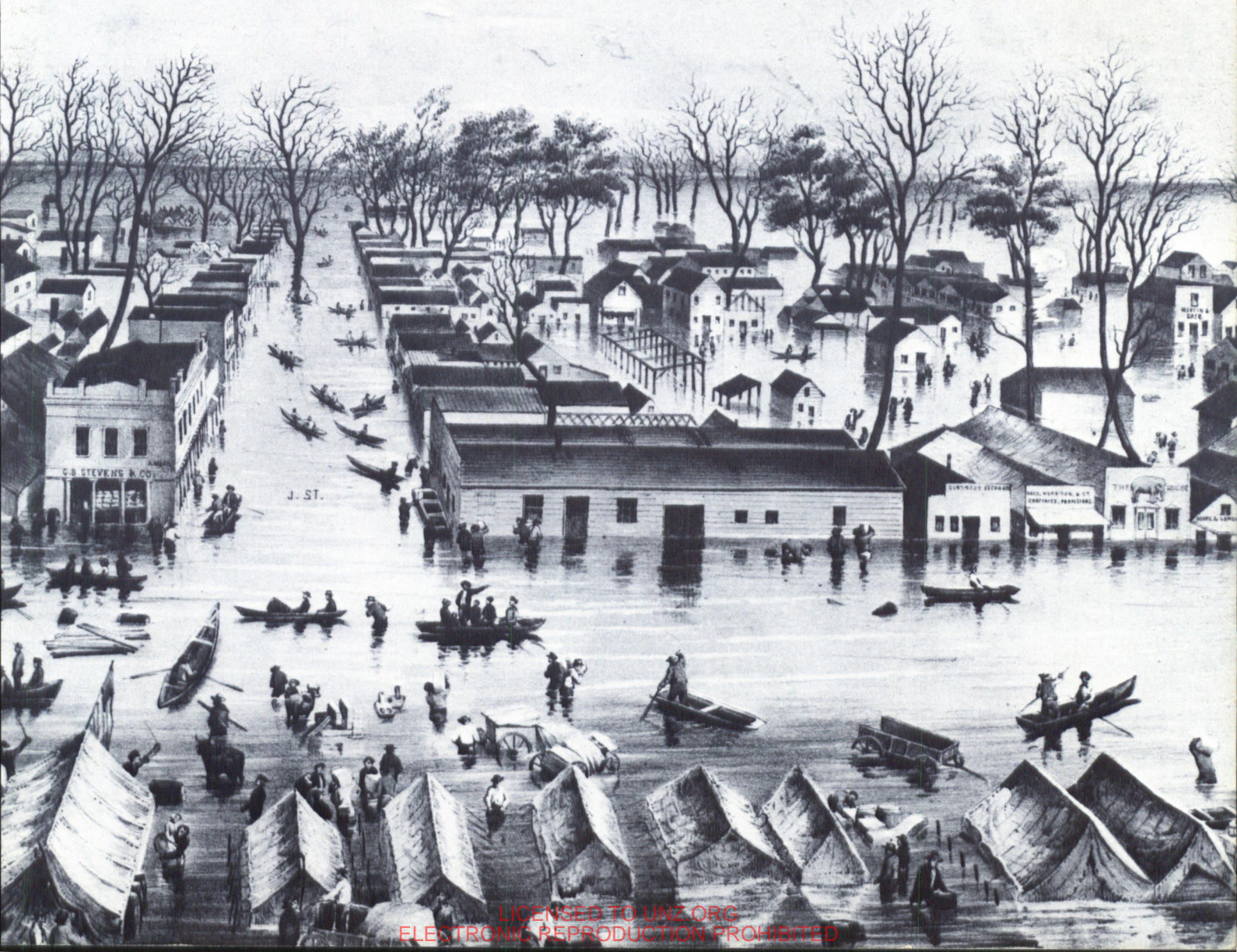


California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

spring 1979



THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, founded in 1871, preserves historical source materials and facilitates their use by both scholars and laymen. The Society's publications, programs, and library services seek to stimulate interest in the historical events and ideas that continue to shape life in California today. Membership is open to all.

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COVER

The Great Inundation of January, 1850, brought the waters of the American and Sacramento rivers surging through infant Sacramento. Immediately, gold seekers camped in tents and businessmen boasting new stores and homes began the work of rebuilding the City of the Plain. For the story of Sacramento's remarkable survival as a viable commercial center in the face of the series of natural and man-made disasters which threatened it in its early decades, turn to the article beginning on page 2. *View of Sacramento City . . .*, drawn by George W. Casilear and Henry Bainbridge. Lithographed and published by Napoleon Sarony, New York, 1850. *Fine Art Collection, CHS*.

California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

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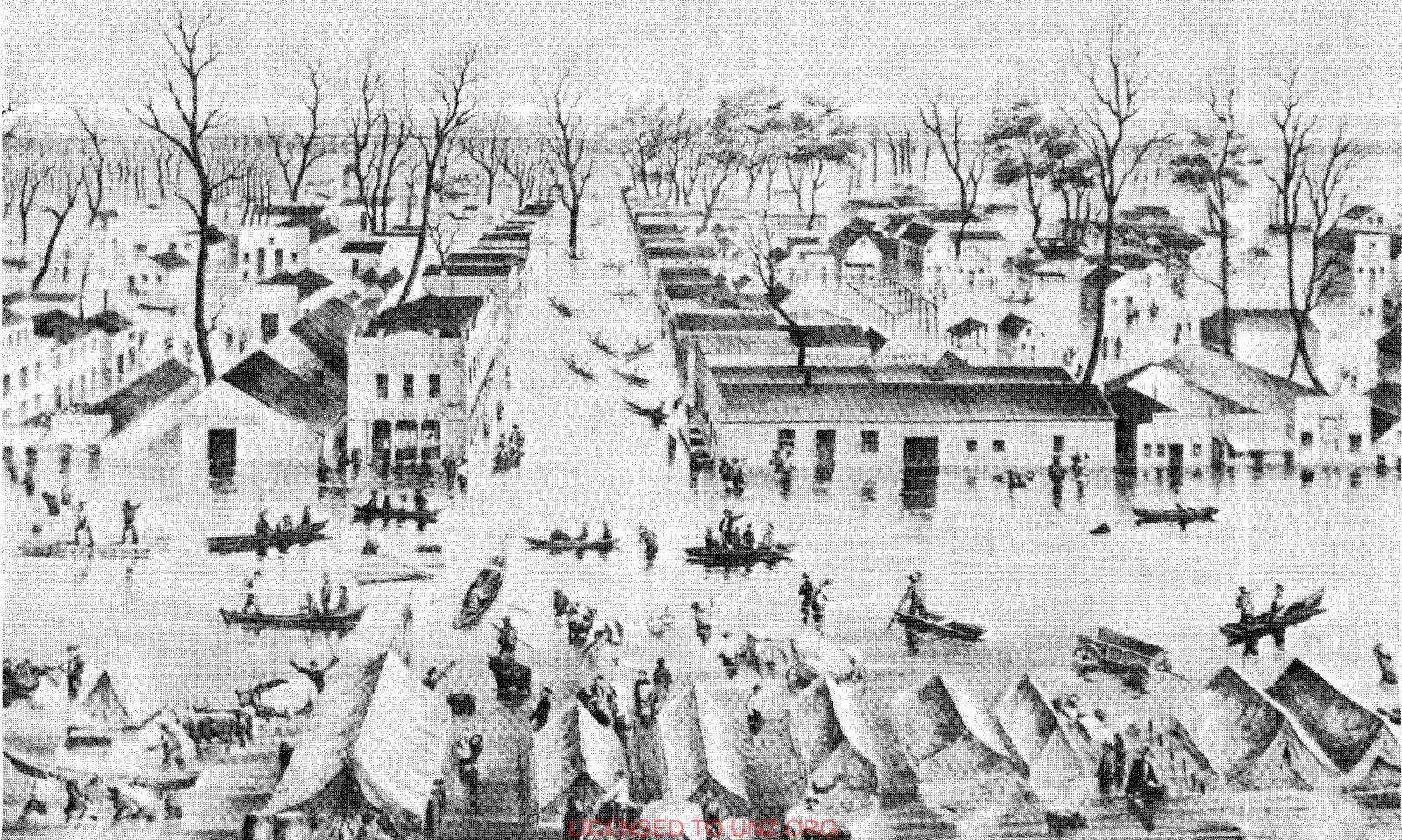
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Sacramento Defies the Rivers 1850-1878



Sacramento was a city born to flood. John Sutter, however unwise about managing his financial affairs, had situated both his fort and his prospective town of Sutterville on high ground. But the men who in 1849 committed their fortunes to his Embarcadero at the confluence of the American and Sacramento rivers exercised no such prudence. The Embarcadero occupied a key commercial crossroads, and the men had opportunity rather than caution on their minds. Though the surrounding land bore clear evidence of past floodings, it was here that they destined their city to rise. True, an unremarkable winter in 1848-49 encouraged a popular delusion that the site was safe from inundation, but in November, 1849, a very different winter season began in earnest. As the year ended, the rivers were spilling into their sloughs, and Sacramentans were about to begin learning how fearsome their rivers could be.

Between 1850 and 1878 the rivers would in fact exert a formative influence on the state's capital city. In 1850, 1852, and 1853, these usually benevolent commercial lifelines came near to wrecking the town. The subsequent eight-year respite ended with yet another flood in March, 1861. During the following winter of 1862-63, Sacramento was under water with such disheartening frequency that to speak of separate floods rather than one long disaster is to make a pointless distinction. A final major flood struck within the city limits in 1878, apparently the first in sixteen years "worthy of being chronicled."¹ Because this last flood primarily affected out-

lying portions of the city, it is mentioned only as evidence that by 1878 Sacramento had overcome the worst of this periodic menace. The city's victory was won only after its founding citizens learned that avaricious arrogance alone could not purchase a great and permanent settlement. Other qualities were needed—qualities that more than incidentally helped identify and define the city's spirit. Their emergence made it possible for Sacramentans to build California's first great levees, raise sections of the city through massive landfill projects, and straighten river channels as though such endeavors were merely ordinary civic undertakings.

Despite the naive hopes of its earliest pioneers, Sacramento's trial by water was not to be avoided. On Wednesday, January 9, 1850, new storms began battering the valley. Sutter Lake, the slough north of the Embarcadero, began flooding the town at low-lying places between First and Third streets. Within hours some four-fifths of the city was under water, excepting portions of the natural levee along Front Street and the knoll at the public square at Tenth. Four days later the flood level stabilized at perhaps four to six feet above ground level.² The big question was no longer whether the town could flood, but how the young settlement would meet the crisis.

Following the initial inundation, boating became both a necessity and a common diversion. Some *bona fide* boats sold for as high as \$1,000 or rented for \$30 an hour in a spectacular display of a free market economy.³ But every sort of buoyant craft plied the streets, and even for people having no place of importance to go, the bother of hammering together a vessel might be rewarded by the salvaging of moorless liquor casks from the water. There were also people needing rescue, but loss of life directly attributable to the flood was minor. Though several Sacramentans were thought to have drowned, only one victim is known by name, a Richard Wilkinson who fell into the swollen current while boarding a brig in the Sacramento River. Tradition tells of an unnamed Dutch-

Marvin Brienés is a Brooklyn-born historian who has lived in the Sacramento area for the past decade. He holds a Ph.D. degree in history from the University of California at Davis, has taught at Cosumnes River College and the University of California, and is currently an instructor of history at the Woodland Center of Yuba College.

This study was developed for the California Department of Parks and Recreation in connection with research at the site of the Old Sacramento State Historic Park. The work was supported by Title II Grant Number 78002142 of the Public Works Employment Act of 1976.

In the flood of January, 1850, whale boats sold for \$1000 and rented for \$30 an hour. Three weeks later the Placer Times reported that the streets were again passable, "although the walking is yet a little soft."

Springing up at this last haven [Poverty Ridge] was a miniature of the city itself with tents, an instant hotel, and the Forty-niner staples of drinking and gambling.

man drowning through his unwillingness to cut loose a sack of several thousand dollars in gold dust, an apocryphal tale in which one senses a personification of the town's own dilemma. Perhaps for this reason the incident appears in nearly every recounting of this first great flood. Drs. J. B. D. Stillman and John Frederick Morse, whose hospital at the corner of K Street and Third had an upper story, took in every sick, washed-out refugee who reached their windows. For the rest, rescue meant rowing out to Sutter's Fort, to the boats tied up at the Embarcadero, or perhaps to the high ground on Twenty-First Street between P and X streets known as Poverty Ridge. Springing up at this last haven was a miniature of the city itself, with tents, an instant hotel, and the Forty-niner staples of drinking and gambling.⁴

The city abandoned by the refugees was thoroughly wrecked. Livestock by the hundreds drowned throughout the valley, but the city's material loss was staggering. Houses as well as tents simply floated away. A brick building being erected on the corner of J and Second streets fell in on its neighbor. The town's goods fared no better. Dr. Morse put the losses at "hundreds of thousands," and his inventory of individual losses listed the name of every significant businessman in town. The *Daily Alta California* estimated a loss of one million dollars; other estimates ran to three times as much.⁵

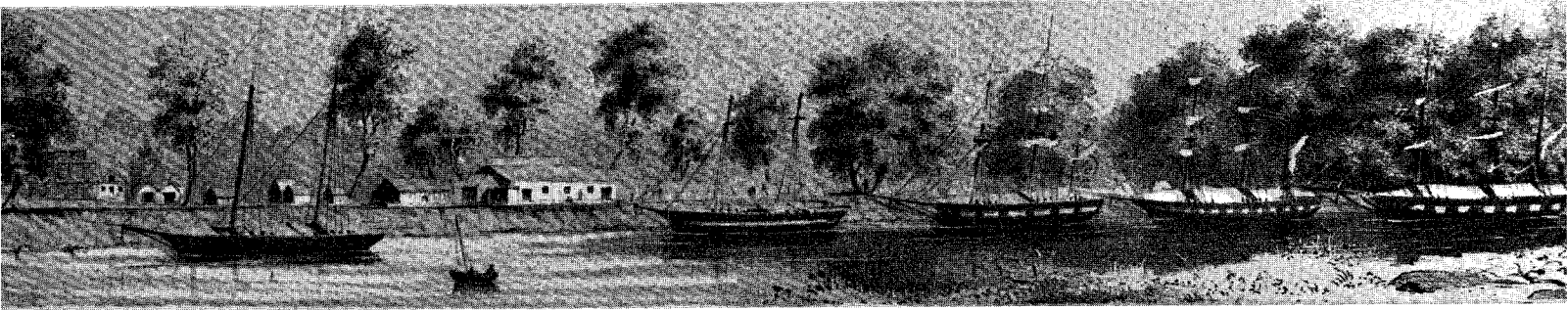
The flood waters began receding on January 14, and by the twenty-sixth the *Alta California* reported that the town was "generally drained and passable." The

Placer Times, locally published and perhaps a better judge of conditions, noted that "the walking is yet a little soft."⁶ But the big story in the flood's wake was not such lingering discomforts, but the alacrity with which Sacramento's citizens wiped their town dry and began it all again. Too much had been staked on this flood-prone site for even so severe a setback to result in a mass exodus. Besides, its magnificent commercial advantages of being on the junction of the rivers and with excellent access to the gold fields remained, offering potential wealth from which renewed fortunes could be carved. Thus the flood dampened everything but the city's enthusiasm. Dr. Morse recalled finding not "a single dejected face or despondent spirit" in the business community. Reports that the flooding had washed gold down from the hills sent a number of carefree opportunists panning for it in the receding tide, while others hurriedly rebuilt the town.⁷ Within a few days of the clearing weather, the stores along Front and J streets opened for business, and some men wistfully concluded that the recent flood had been a freak of nature. The January inundation, however, had shattered opposition to building levees to protect the city, and a consensus was already emerging on the issue of future flood prevention.

Private citizens rather than municipal authorities provided the leadership for levee-building, because the city's government was as yet incapable of sustained civic enterprise. In late January a public meeting resulted in the formation of a citizens' committee to arrange for surveys and cost estimates. A few days later, after the projections were available and presented to the city's common council, a joint citizen-city levee commission was created, and a new survey was undertaken.⁸

By the end of February public interest began focusing on a new municipal charter and the springtime city election, the levee and the election being not entirely distinct issues. The city's political organizations were still inchoate, with each of four major candidates for the new office of mayor supported by *ad hoc* coalitions.

*Sacramento's Embarcadero in 1849,
a bustling entrepot for the gold fields. George
Baker made this seminal sketch of the
steamboat landing and waterfront buildings.*



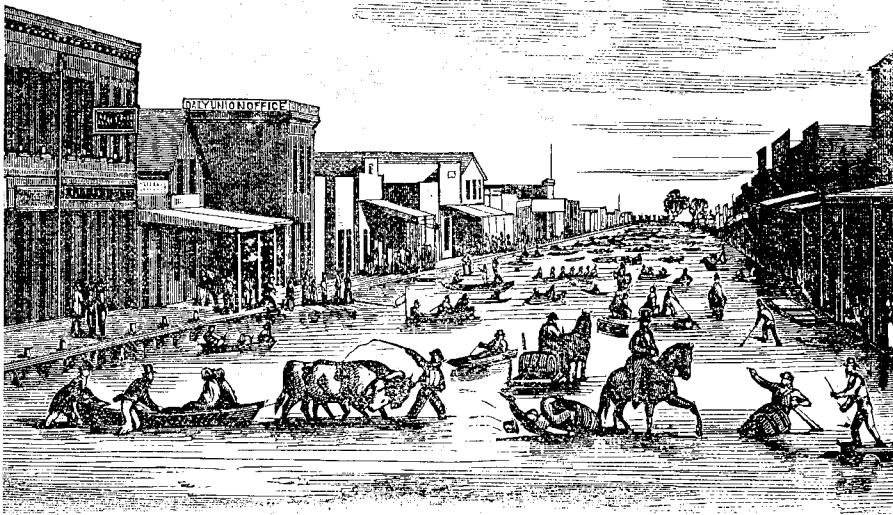
Easily the most popular of the four was Hardin Bigelow, a prominent levee advocate and member of the joint levee commission. On April 1, 1850, following a short but spirited contest of personalities in which Bigelow apparently made the building of a levee a key issue, Bigelow garnered three times the votes of his nearest rival and became Sacramento's first mayor. Public and private initiative for constructing a watertight levee were now linked together in one man.⁹

Mayor Bigelow expressed his commitment to Sacramento's survival soon after his election by spearheading efforts to build an emergency levee during the second week of April. The fast-melting snowpack had swollen the rivers alarmingly. In Sacramento a number of citizens labored to throw up crude levees where sloughs threatened to spill over, and Bigelow sought council backing to construct an emergency levee to prevent an impending flood. The nearly penniless city agreed to a proposal under which Bigelow immediately borrowed the funds needed to construct the work, with the understanding—in the mayor's mind at least—that the city would honor these obligations as a matter of high priority. Bigelow found it necessary to negotiate for loans in excess of the city's \$10,000 limit at 5 percent interest, and to tap his personal assets for an additional \$6,000. The ensuing financial headache plagued the mayor to his

deathbed at year's end, but the money he mobilized put dozens of laborers to work under his immediate and tireless supervision.¹⁰ The anticipated second flood in 1850 was avoided, the efficacy of levees demonstrated beyond dispute and Mayor Bigelow's reputation for civic virtue enhanced even beyond its already substantial dimensions.

By the end of April city voters approved a special \$250,000 tax assessment for the building of a permanent levee. Despite an empty city treasury and a cholera epidemic which depressed the economy and forced the raising of funds by bonds as well as taxation, the levee was constructed between September and December, 1850. Its cost fully disabused Sacramentans of that article of faith which had maintained that an adequate levee could be thrown up at a small expense, but there it stood, running nine miles along the northern and western boundaries of the city. Beginning at high ground near Brighton, the earthworks ran along the southern bank of the American River to Twelfth Street, then rejoined the bank near where the lines of A and Fifth streets intersected. Crossing Sutter Lake, where a sluice gate was built into the levee, it ran southward along the Sacramento River beyond the city limits where it turned east and terminated at the Sutterville heights. Surveying the 121,000 cubic yards of soil that now testified to the seriousness of their purpose, Sacramentans agreed that "to all human appearance another inundation is impossible."¹¹

An incongruous holiday atmosphere reappeared in the second and third of Sacramento's floods in 1852 and 1853. J Street witnessed "an aquatic carnival," and "the town was afloat on a frolic."



The impossible occurred less than a year and a half later when heavy late winter rains began swelling the two rivers at the beginning of March, 1852. On Sunday evening, March 7, the full force of the flood tide, which had already disrupted communications outside the city, hit the untested levee. As water lapped at the levee top, the area housing the sluice gate began to weaken. A visitor to the city described the ensuing scene:

Last night at 12-1/2 o'clock we were suddenly awoken by the tolling of the alarm bell and made aware of the impending danger. The levee on the Sacramento had given way in one small place, and the opening became every moment larger. I run [sic] to the place of the disaster and assisted in stopping the opening, but all endeavors were fruitless and the water widened it every moment more and more and gushed through with increasing impetuosity. All at once a large piece of the levee on which we stood was loosened under our feet and gave way with a tremendous crash. I was with a number of others thrown into the water and taken away with the current for a considerable distance.¹²

The slough filled to the brim with terrifying suddenness, as the water swept away the bridge at the sluice-gate and cut the city off at its north end. Mayor J. R. Hardenburgh, who had been laboring that night to save the levee, recalled having to walk for some miles along the bank of the American River before reaching high ground and finding a path to return to the city.¹³ The frantic levee tenders could not wait for the mayor's return, for the slough had begun reaching the level of I Street at Second, and from there the water threatened to run on to J Street. At first a temporary levee was thrown up along I Street to Second, but when the water began flowing into the city at Seventh Street, the levee on I was continued to that place. But no emergency efforts could save the city from this second flood. The business district had already flooded, and the permanent levee along the American was giving way. By daybreak the extent of the debacle was revealed: K Street was under two feet of water; J Street was under slightly less; other por-

tions of the city were covered to a depth that in low spots reached a full twelve feet. In fact virtually the entire city, with the major exceptions of the knoll on Tenth Street, Sutter's Fort, and Poverty Ridge, was under water. "An unbroken sea" was both an appropriate metaphor and, until the rivers began falling on Thursday, March 11, not far from reality.¹⁴

In some ways the experiences of 1850 were now repeated. Stranded on the knoll at the Tenth Street Plaza and sharing the spot of dry land with "wagons, tents, cattle and horses, in confused and motley assemblage,"¹⁵ miserable refugees huddled with the belongings they had been able to carry with them. The incongruous holiday atmosphere reappeared as well. Bizarre water craft were tested on the flooded streets, including hide and metal "boats" and at least one side-wheeler. All the craft, it was reported, were "filled with people, out on business or pleasure, —all, too, joyous and happy. It was, in fact, an aquatic carnival, and the town was afloat on a frolic." As for losses, the past was fortunately not precisely repeated. No lives were lost, and warnings before the levees gave way enabled many Sacramentans to remove their most valuable goods to high ground. Farmers, such as William Dresser who lost \$1,000 in garden vegetables, staggered from their losses, but the 1850 levee had held back the rivers long enough to save the business community from ruin.¹⁶

Post-mortems and new planning proceeded even as the city remained submerged. Had Sacramento miscalculated in banning wagon traffic from the levee which would have helped pack down the dirt embankment? Had the city not erred even more seriously in carrying the levee around the slough, for had it not been the makeshift I Street levee alone that had stemmed the flood tide?

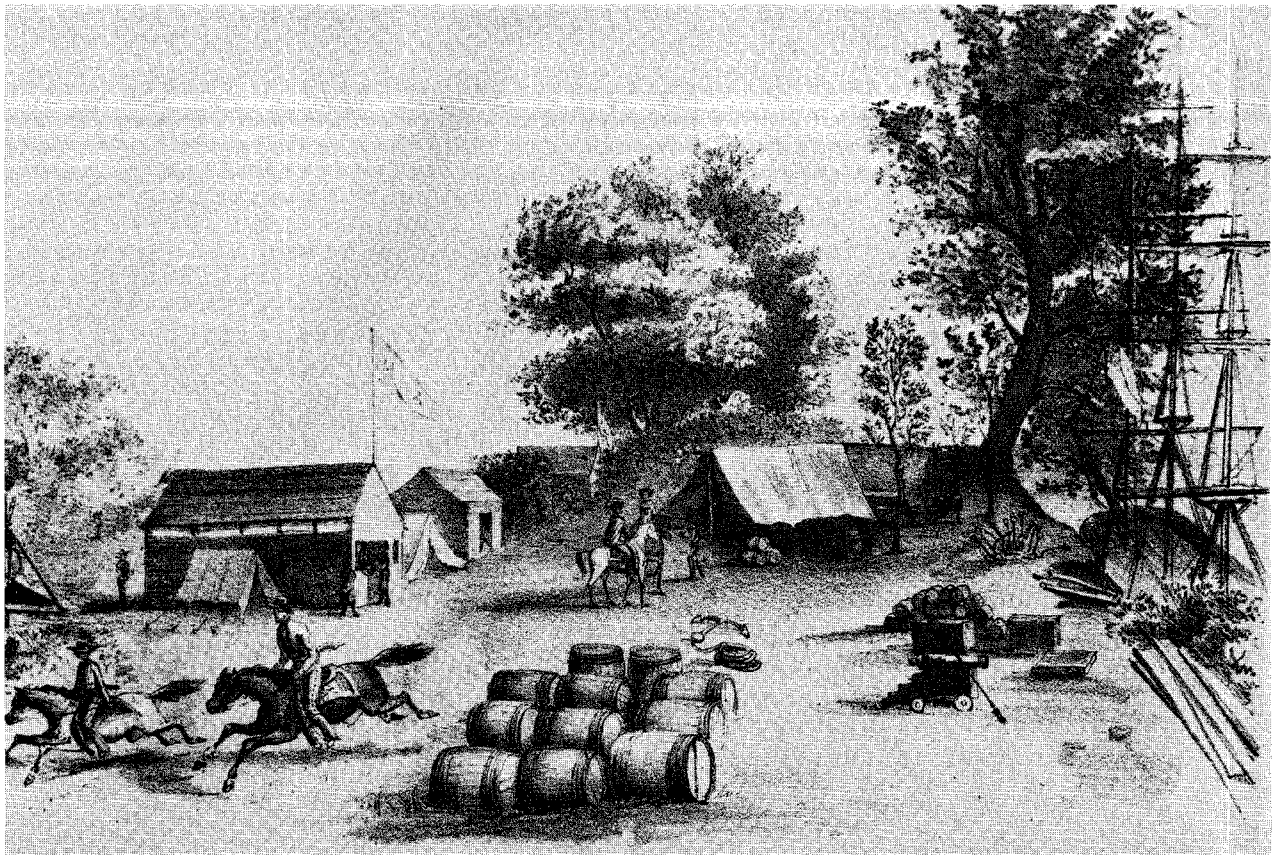
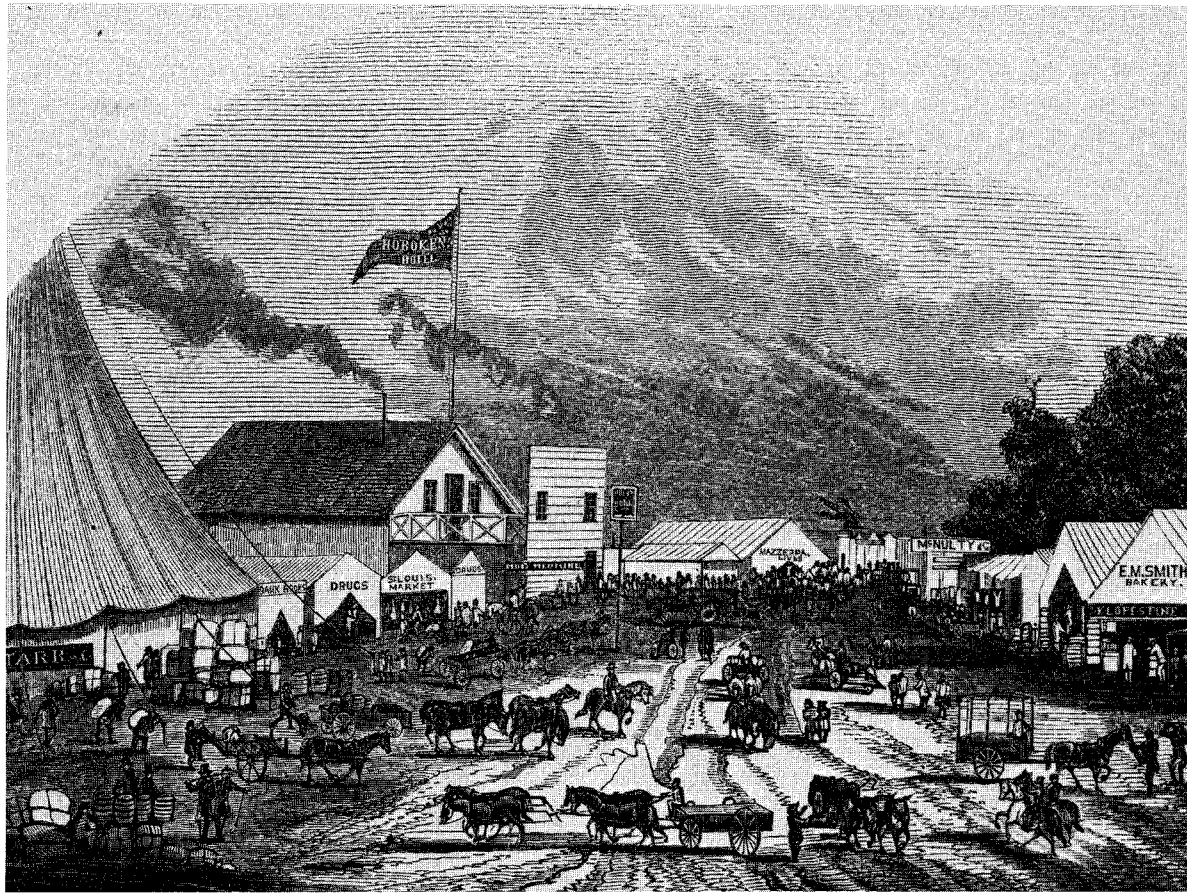
On March 10, the mayor called for a new levee to be built on I Street from the Front Street levee up to Fifth Street, and from Fifth along the edge of Sutter Lake and then to a meeting with the 1850 levee along the Ameri-

can River. The council adopted the proposal, and the project was begun in mid-September, 1852. By November work on the \$50,000 alteration had progressed to the stage where Sacramentans felt secure once again. Despite prospects of renewed flooding in the coming winter, property values rose through the autumn. The phenomenon was attributed mainly to "the general feeling which prevails of the perfect exemption hereafter of the city against inundation."¹⁷

Winter rescinded the exemption by drenching the Sacramento Valley with more than three feet of rain. In the city itself, the swollen American forced a break about thirty feet wide in the new I Street levee. Hurried repairs kept flooding to a minimum, but three weeks later on December 19, the American River levee gave way along an eighty-foot stretch. Before it could be repaired more minor flooding hit the business district, where streets were soon covered to a depth of several inches. Although damage was light and the water subsided quickly, part of the city was still flooded as late as December 25. More rain followed. By New Year's Eve the Sacramento River was running two feet higher than in the 1850 flood. But then the levee along the American broke once again. By 1:00 A.M. on New Year's Day, 1853, the *Union* reported, "the floods had come in upon the city a second time in good earnest."¹⁸ Daybreak revealed K Street under a minimum of four feet, with low spots under as much as six feet of water. J Street was flooded to depths of two to four feet. South of K Street, it became impossible to remain on the first floor of a house. The cross streets were flooded below Fifth Street nearly all the way to I, and above Fifth the flooding extended to H Street.

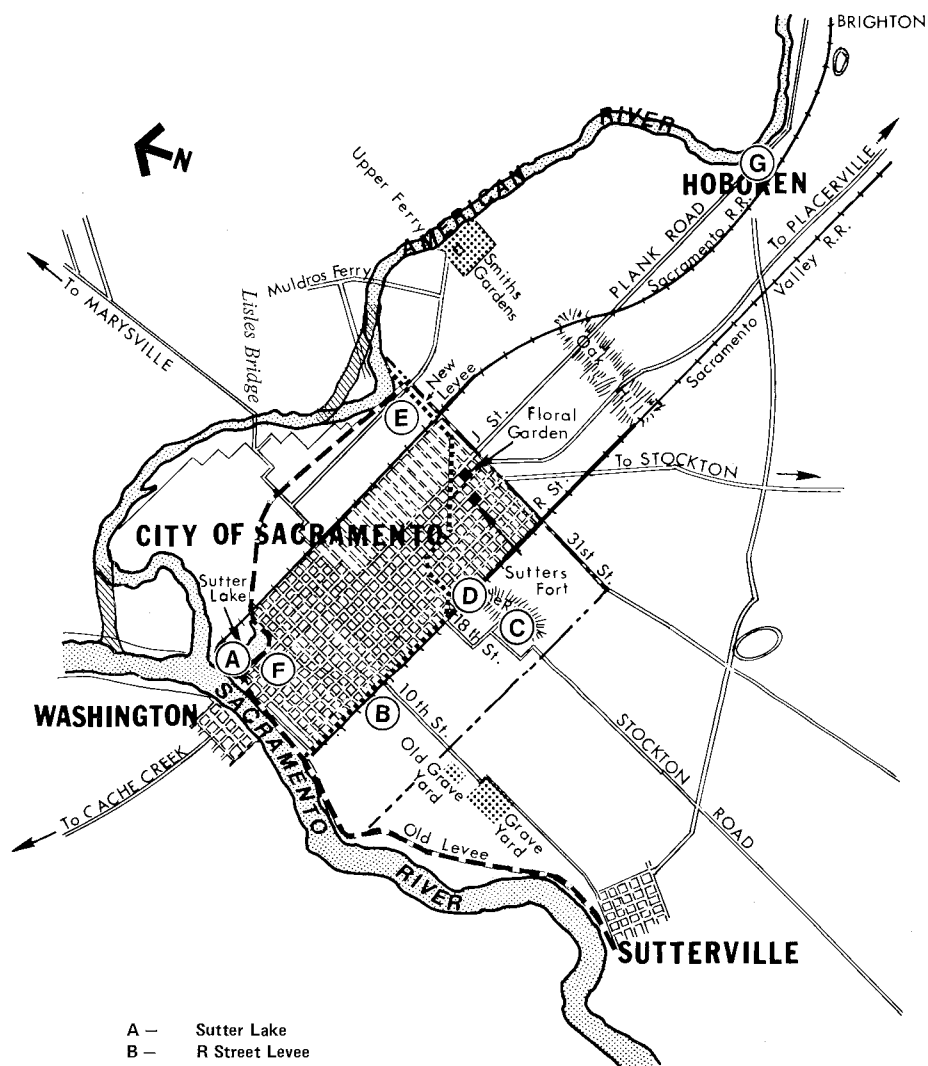
By this time, an outward display of frivolity had become a means for publicly affirming an inner certainty concerning the city's survival in the face of a catastrophe. During the December flooding, the din from oarsmen in the streets had been enough to make one believe that "the lunatics of a hundred hospitals had been sent here

(continued)

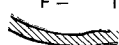


"Hoboken's main thoroughfare (it had but one) presented a pleasant spectacle of crowded business from morning till night. At times so dense was the jam of vehicles that foot passengers found it almost impossible to thread their way successfully among them." Sacramento Pictorial Union, April, 1853.

SACRAMENTO, circa 1854



- A — Sutter Lake
- B — R Street Levee
- C — Poverty Hill
- D — Meeting point of the SVRR tracks and the R Street Levee
- E — Rabel's Tannery
- F — The raised business district, bordered at Sutter Lake by the I Street Levee



American River rechanneling of the 1860's

G = Presumed site of Hoboken

Suttersville, Sacramento's rival to the south in the early 1850s, offered businessmen free lots on high ground, but had little else to recommend it as a commercial nerve center.

to assist in the uproar." Once again boating became the rage. J Street was a particularly favored location, and by generous estimates up to 500 craft plied its length. Because it was New Year's Day, families out making their calls cheerily waved handkerchiefs as their boats glided past one another. In the four years that there had been a Sacramento, disease, fire, and flood had struck like biblical plagues, yet the city remained. Of course scourges of this sort were shrugged off in many frontier settlements as elements of earthly travail, or as modes of involuntary penance decreed in heaven. To survive them was a source of the courage needed to endure future afflictions. It was this stage through which the valley's key settlement passed in late 1852 and early 1853. First the Great Fire of November which leveled whole sections of the town; then another winter of flood. "The people of Sacramento," the *Union* remarked in a statement touching the heart of the matter, "have become inured to hardships and injurious visitations." Fittingly, Sacramento rose out of its ashes and mire. By February it was bustling again.¹⁹

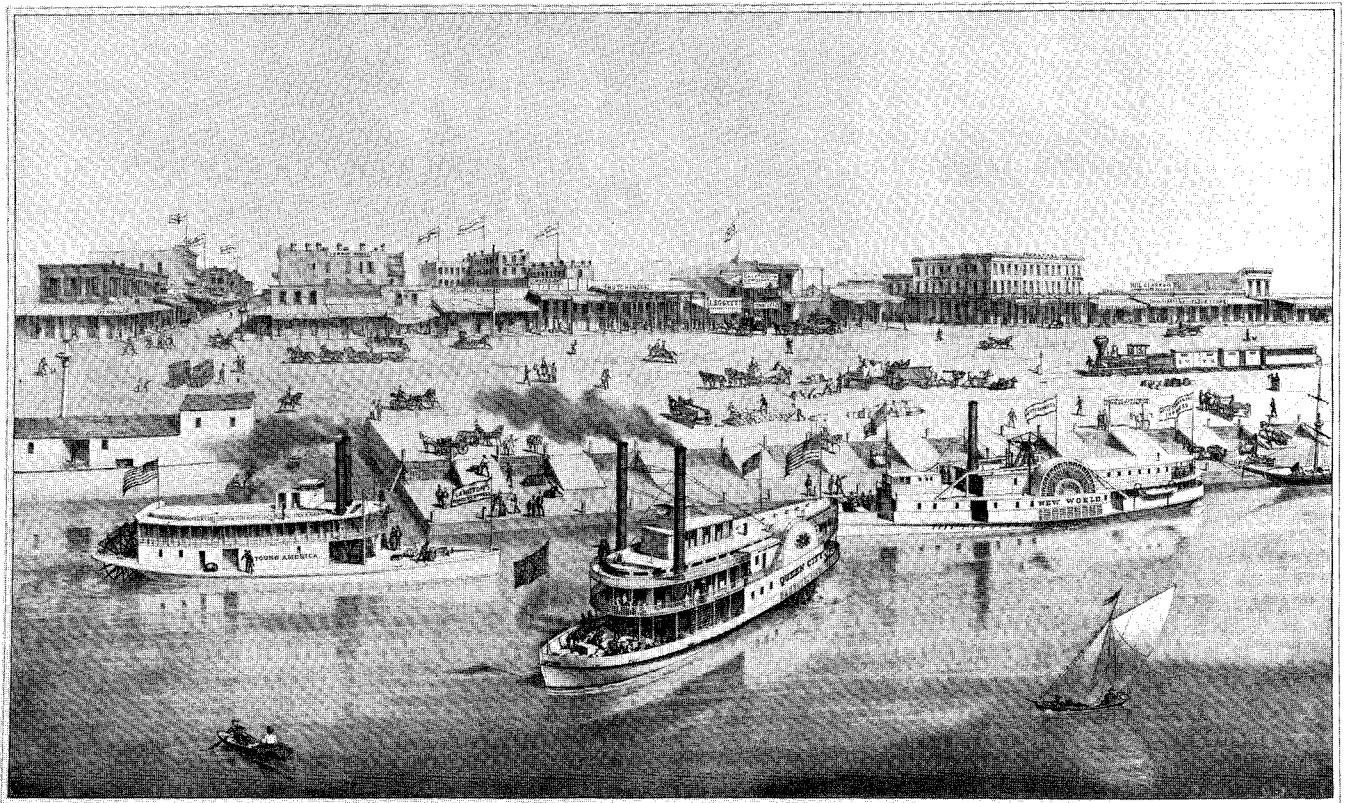
But moral triumphs alone would not suffice to make a city. The dreary winter floods, augmented in April by a final and more minor inundation, precipitated a major rethinking of how to secure Sacramento against more such disastrous seasons. The city's leaders understood very well that no amount of civic stoicism could alone assure survival, especially in view of the grim competition Sacramento faced in its drive for commercial dominance. After all, they reasoned, how many times could the city be flooded and still attract business on the basis of its desirable geographic setting? Other potential commercial centers along the river highways, Hoboken and Sutterville for example, commanded high ground if not locations as strategic as Sacramento's at the junction

of the rivers. During the latest deluge both these sites were successful in attracting, at least temporarily, many presumably well-rooted Sacramento city merchants. The desire to restore the disrupted commerce between Sacramento and its gold country markets was felt intensely, especially because the November fire had destroyed so much merchandise that profits would be high on the goods which remained.

Some displaced merchants had removed to Sutter's Fort, a site in decay but nevertheless on high ground; more men took off for other points along the American River, the most favored of which sat a mile downstream from Brighton. Here a city of tents housing dozens of businesses sprang up. One onlooker noted that its single street, merchandise heaped along its length, was "filled with wagons and pack mules from the interior awaiting their loads, the teamsters preferring to pay twenty dollars per ton extra to the labor and expense of a journey of four miles to the city." By the second week in January, 1853, the thriving new town was being supplied from the Sacramento waterfront by four steamboats. In two weeks \$80,000 in gold passed into the hands of the Sacramento merchants at the site. Dignified by the name "Hoboken" and a "mayor" who had been selected in a fit of good humor, the trading post was not abandoned until the roads dried out in mid-February.²⁰

Hoboken may have been mostly an augury, but Sutterville posed a certain threat. Located along the Sacramento River south of the city, it had been vying with Sacramento for dominance since 1849. Its command of high ground in times of flood was its only advantage, but this was an attractive one through the winter of 1852-53, when some of Sacramento's fleeing businessmen set up their tents in Sutterville. Some fifteen of them pledged fortune and sacred honor to a permanent relocation, and Sutterville's speculators augmented the attractions of their site by offering lots and cash to Sacramento businessmen who would move there. The attempt at town-building ultimately failed, and most of

Contemplated waterfront improvements, including a new levee system, were the important subject of this 1856 lithograph.



the merchants soon found it necessary to choose between Suttersville and prosperity,²¹ but the experience also wiped out the last vestiges of Sacramento's complacency. "We must give the world confidence in the stability and permanence of the place,"²² urged a worried businessman with a stake in the Sacramento economy. Following the 1853 flood, Sacramento attempted to overcome its menace with more vigor and imagination than ever before witnessed.

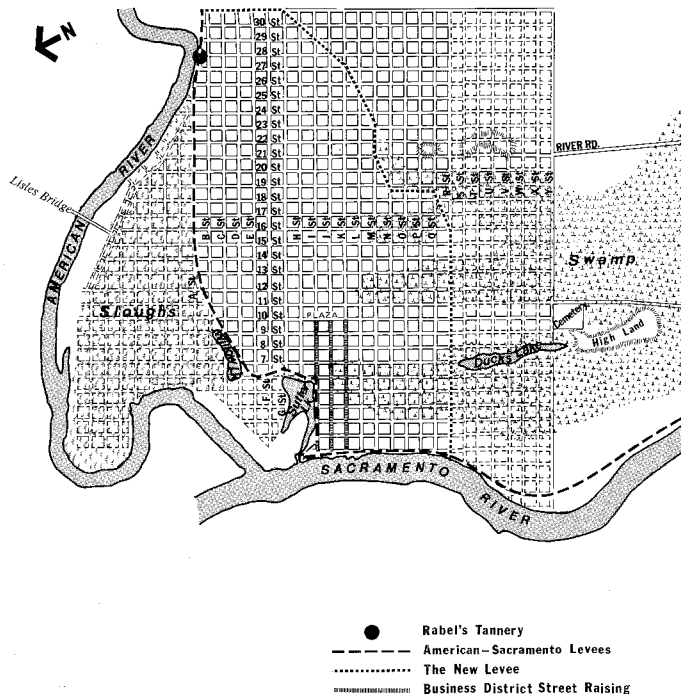
The ensuing drive for flood-free real estate had three main aspects. One was an attempt to improve transportation to the city outskirts by building an all-weather wagon road. J Street, running through the heart of the business district, was graded and planked by property

owners along its length from Front to Twelfth streets, and by the city from Twelfth to the city limits. Beyond, a planked toll road was constructed to run to Brighton. In addition, experiences with the recent flood spurred construction of the Sacramento Valley Railroad, the West's first commercial line, which ran initially from Sacramento to Folsom.²³

The second aspect of the town's drive to protect itself and secure a decisive advantage over its rivals involved building and improving the levees. By the beginning of 1854 the city's investment in levees grew by \$150,000, and by the time most of the work was completed, the capital outlay had soared to \$600,000 above the original 1850 levee costs. Knowledgeable citizens later estimated

A bird's eye view of Sacramento in 1857 by George Baker showed the growing community aptly named "the City of the (Flood) Plain."

SACRAMENTO, circa 1860

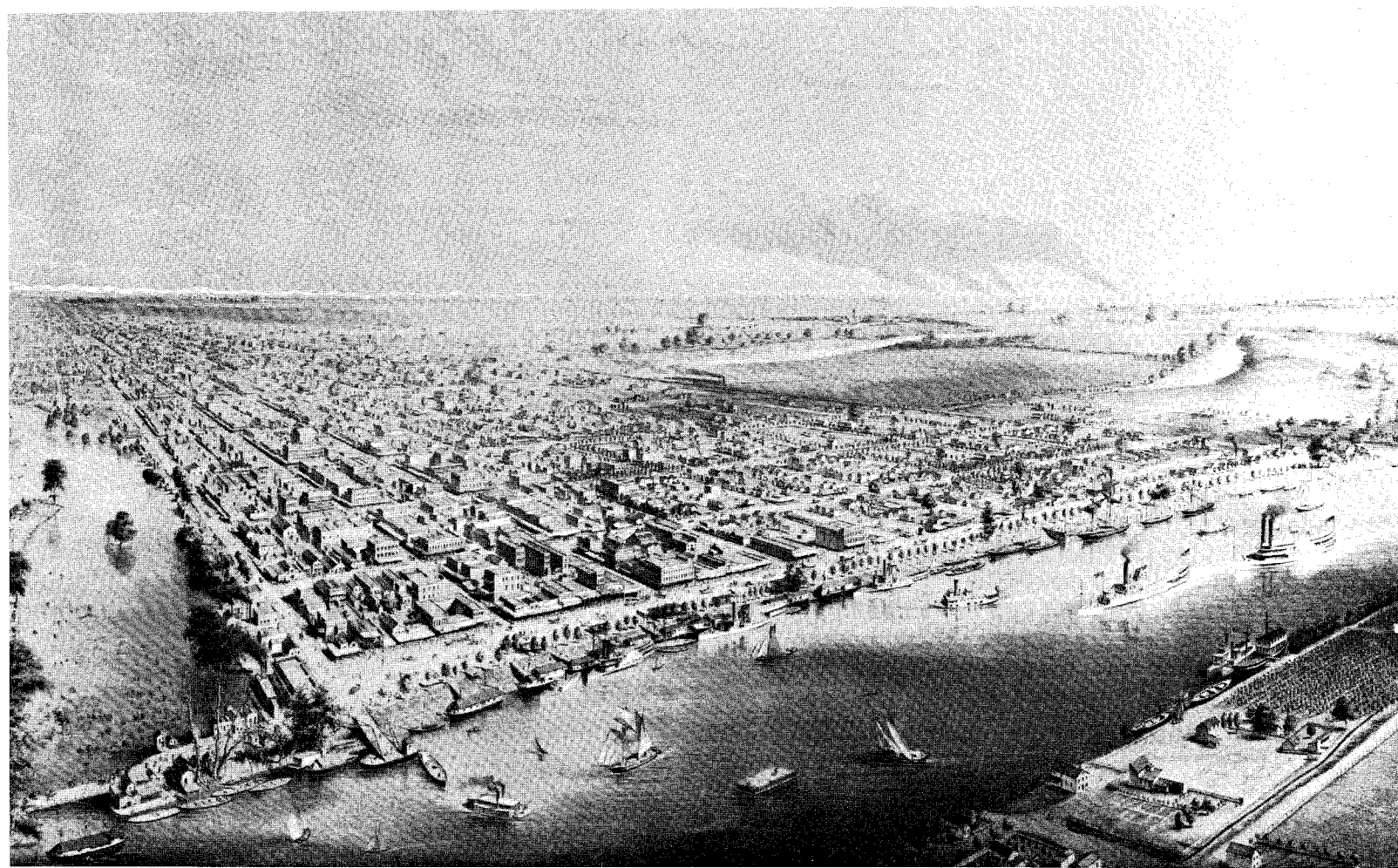


the total cost of levee building prior to 1861 at between \$700,000 and \$1,500,000,²⁴ the latter amount reflecting the interest paid out on the city's various bond issues. In addition, the earthworks along I Street, first constructed in 1852, were extended to Sixth Street and generally improved. The levee on the Sacramento was rebuilt in most places to meet a high-grade specification of 22½ feet above the low-water mark, and in some places moved as much as 300 feet from where it stood originally. Finally, a project was begun to complete the levee encirclement of the main inhabited portion of the city. The New Levee, as it was called, began at R Street and the Sacramento River, ran along R Street to just below Sixteenth Street, and then followed the meandering path of Burns Slough in a northeasterly direction.

Meeting M Street at about Twenty-fourth Street, the New Levee continued past Sutter's Fort to a meeting at Thirty-first and A streets with the levee built up on A Street.²⁵

The third phase in the city's battle with the river was Sacramento's decision to raise the level of several city streets.²⁶ Of the measures taken to prevent future flooding, none approached street-raising for audacity, and the accomplishment remains to this day one of the unnatural wonders of Sacramento. The work was accomplished mainly in the 1860s, but the flooding of 1852-1853 stimulated the very first of such efforts. Under municipal supervision, but with funds raised through assessments against the property owners along the streets being elevated, J and K streets were filled to Eighth Street, as were the numbered cross streets down to Front Street. Property owners on I Street continued the filling of their street from where the levee left it on Sixth to the public square four blocks further east. Incidental and expensive inconveniences abounded, especially because owners needed to raise floors and reconstruct facades as the street level rose in front of their buildings, but this apparently seemed a reasonable price to pay for a three or four-foot rise in the level of the business district which, in all, cost over \$250,000. By 1854, then, with the improving of transportation underway, the building of an encircling levee, and the raising of the business district, a prudent observer might well believe Sacramento's fight against flood was over. As though in recognition of such earnest efforts, there followed more than seven fat years in which the city prospered, unthreatened by the rivers.

Towards the end of winter in 1861 the city's good fortune began changing when melting snow swelled the American River to a height last matched in the floods nearly eight years earlier. Eyes were riveted on the bend of the American River near the intersection of its southern bank and Twenty-eighth Street, a location known as Rabel's Tannery. Here the river coursed through a



sharp U-shaped turn, severely eroding the river bank and the A Street levee. Concern over flooding at this spot had marked even the relatively eventless interlude from 1853 to 1861. Any time the rivers rose, so did concern for the integrity of the levees, even though the unsettling effects of such talk bothered real estate investors almost as much as an actual flood itself, and a popular theory maintained that the large scale diversion of water to reservoirs for mining or agriculture had permanently lowered the rivers' flow. In October, 1860, for example, the city's levee committee warned of "fearful inroads" on the bank at Rabel's, and a wing-dam was constructed on the site to check the erosion.²⁷ But on March 28, 1861, the overburdened American washed out bridges along its length, destroyed the new wing-dam, and then breached the levee. The first flood since 1853 was upon the city. Though the waters receded very quickly and damage was minor, Sacramento's lucky streak had ended.

The following winter was extraordinarily wet. All over the valley rivers overflowed their banks, and the Sacramento Valley Railroad could send trains no further

than Poverty Ridge on the way to Folsom. On the Sacramento River the steamboat *Swallow* careened out of control and took some casualties as the vessel struck a bridge pier. At 6:00 A.M. on December 9, 1861, the levee near Rabel's Tannery gave way. At first there seemed to be no danger to the city because the break was to the east of the tannery between Rabel's and Smith's Gardens. Though this meant the flooding of the countryside, it also meant that the city's encircling levee system had not been breached. The New Levee would now, presumably, repay the city's investment in it. In addition was the encouraging fact that the break in the levee itself relieved some of the fierce pressure at Rabel's Tannery. Uneasy but hopeful, Sacramentans made few preparations for disaster. Then catastrophe occurred, bringing a "Great Calamity" widely recognized as the most destructive flood the city had ever experienced.²⁸

Ironically, the flood's severity resulted in part from the improvements constructed after the flooding of the 1850s: the Sacramento Valley Railroad (SVRR) and the New Levee. The SVRR tracks entered the city from the direction of Brighton at R Street. There the route ran

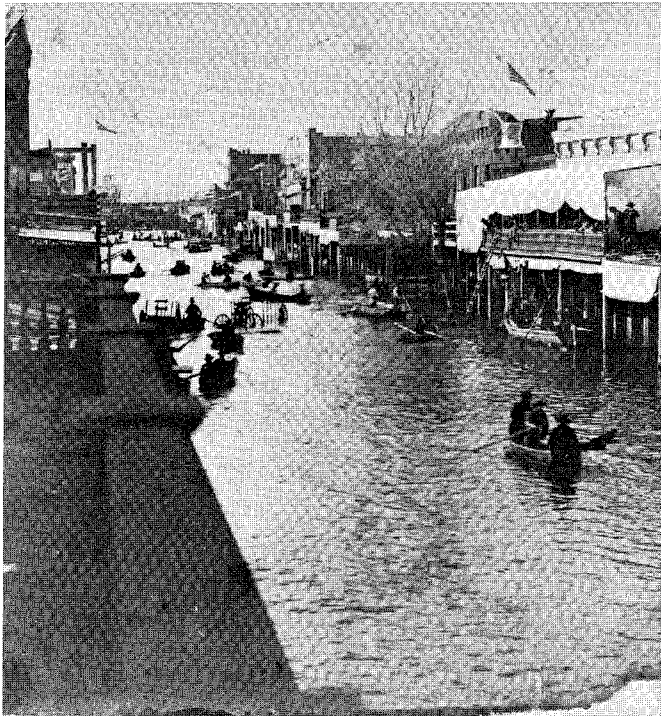


atop the R Street levee from Sixteenth Street to Front Street. Because the SVRR ran on its own embankment before joining the levee, it in effect created a walled-in corner northeast of the intersection of R and Sixteenth streets, precisely along the drainage path of Burns Slough. The railroad company had built a bridge for the tracks just east of the levee to permit the flow to continue south of the embankment, but this opening had either been filled in or clogged with debris. When the flood water pouring in through the levee break along the American followed the path of Burns Slough to the intersection, it created a menacing lake at Sacramento's southeast corner.

Quickly the turbulent lake rose to the height of the embankments and damaged the city's levee. A bare two hours after the break along the American occurred, the city was awash. By early afternoon even the raised business district stood several feet under the tide. The R

Street levee was then cut open to permit the accumulated flood waters to flow on south of the city, but this solution created dangers of its own. The lake that had been formed on the north of the R Street levee had already lifted more than two-dozen houses off their foundations when the levee was cut at Fifth Street. The houses were carried off and dashed to pieces as they passed the levee. Some of the occupants had been rescued earlier under terrifying circumstances, but a Mr. Isaacs remained on board, determined to go down with his home. He reportedly jumped to safety only as the building "was about to clear for Sutterville." Assuredly his move was uncommonly melodramatic, but thousands of Sacramentans shared fully in the horrors of the flood of December 9, 1861. Some would recall for the rest of their lives a wall of water rushing toward their homes.²⁹ Others would remember abandoning the street-level floors of houses and retreating with treasured belong-

From December, 1861, to the following February, Sacramento endured its worst winter flood. Although the city had dramatically matured in the flood-free years since the early 1850s, as the view (below) of K Street between Second and Third indicates, many people questioned the city's geographic viability.



ings to an upper story. Many were forced to abandon their homes and to seek that familiar refuge, Poverty Ridge, which rose as an island outside the levee line. "We found ourselves a long mile from the city," remembered one of these refugees,

on what was known as Poverty Ridge, and then the water was rushing through the breaks in the R Street levee with such force that we dared not attempt to go further, so we had to remain on the Ridge all night, and I need not say that it was a night of terrible suspense to many of us, for we could know nothing of the condition of our families. We only knew that between us and them was a raging torrent carrying death, devastation and ruin in its course, and that from a distance beyond the reach of our assistance we could distinctly hear the despairing cries of men, women and children who were expecting every moment that their homes would be afloat and themselves borne with them beyond the possibility of mortal arms to rescue them.³⁰

Under such circumstances, rapacity and philanthropy

thrived side by side. Stories of the helpless being abandoned because they could not pay extortionate fees became a staple of local history during this flood. Strikingly different were the experiences of hundreds of flood victims who found refuge in the Pavilion, a large new State Fair building at Sixth and M streets. There the Howard Benevolent Society provided blankets and hot soup for Sacramentans needing shelter until after New Year's Day.

The worst of the December 9 flood was over by the following afternoon, but similar disasters followed in its wake for the rest of the winter. On January 9, 1862, the levee at Rabel's Tannery again gave way, despite attempts to strengthen the line since the last break. The river levels were even higher than they had been in December, but the path taken by the raging water into the city made this deluge less memorable than the last.³¹ Water gradually rolled in from the east across an even front, and by the morning of January 10, the southern part of Sacramento was under two and a half feet of water. Following a familiar scenario, businessmen raised their goods onto platforms, making educated guesses as to the height of the waters flowing in from the east; the Howard Benevolent Society fed and housed refugees at the Pavilion; women and children watched at second-story windows; hundreds of boats, including bathtubs, plied the Sacramento canals; heroes made rescues, most notably at Burns Slough where some thirty stranded levee workers found shaky refuge by clinging to the roof of a building through the violent night; other men labored frantically to close the levee breaches; and Sacramentans with studied contempt for their afflictions made merry, or carried on as usual. It was during this flood that Leland Stanford was rowed to the capitol to be inaugurated as governor. Returning home, as an enduring but unsubstantiated legend would have it, the Stanfords found their piano floating in the reception room and so moored it to the bannister before retreating to the upper story.³²

Other floods tormented the city in December, later on in January, 1862, and at the beginning of February. Not until the following August did the last of the standing pools of water finally evaporate. Though the incredible winter had brought devastating flooding all across the Pacific Coast, Sacramentans took little solace in having had so much company in their misery. They questioned, as they had not since 1853, the city's very viability. "Sacramento must act now," the *Union* warned, "or be blotted from the map of cities."³³ Not surprisingly, the city did act. During the years that followed the levees were rebuilt, the business district was raised again, and two serpentine stretches of the American River were rechanneled. By these arrangements the city would come

close to victory in its dozen years of battle with the rivers.

Levee work proceeded under the authority of a new board of city levee commissioners, a five-member elected body. By 1863 the levees were raised four feet above the high water mark of the previous year. The costs of this project were considerable—the stretch along the Sacramento from P to Y streets was estimated at \$36,000 alone—but no one suggested the work was an extravagance.³⁴ Street raising engendered more controversy, but it, too, was becoming a reality by 1863. With the crumbling of diehard opposition by 1867, high-grading the business district became an unquestioned civic act. Two years later, though tapering operations were to continue for some time longer, the entire district



Partially tamed by the I Street levee in the 1850s and the building of the Central Pacific tracks in the 1860s, Sutter Slough was permanently obliterated by landfill shortly after the turn of the century.



Civil optimism to the contrary, earthen levees such as these breastworks south of town (left) failed to hold back the water at its highest stages.

of I, J, and K streets from Front Street to the Plaza at Tenth was permanently perched on a mountainous quantity of hauled-in fill.³⁵

Straightening the American River was a less audacious project, but perhaps even more necessary. Near its mouth and at Rabel's Tannery, the river followed a tortuous path that caused overflow when the waters ran high and heavily. Accordingly, the river was guided in both places into straighter slough channels which were actually old river beds. From late 1862 to the present, the American has joined the Sacramento about a mile further north than before, and today a city dump unceremoniously commemorates the problem site of Rabel's Tannery.³⁶

Sacramento endured a final flood in February of 1878 resulting from the collapse of a gopher-ridden stretch of levee south of the city at Lovedall's Ranch. Because the levee commissioners had to wait for a natural recession of the flood tide to make repairs, flooding continued within the city limits for two weeks, mostly south of the R Street levee but at times to the north as well.³⁷

In response a final levee was constructed within the city limits, running along Y Street from Front to the high ground of Poverty Ridge.

Neither the R Street or Y Street embankment remains today, the first having been removed in 1903 and the second in 1922. By the late years of the century, floods in the streets were memories rather than active dangers. Fewer and fewer inhabitants remembered the years when survival hung in the balance, the times when the *Daily Bee* newspaper was moved to reflect:

Ever since the planting of Sacramento at the confluence of two mighty rivers, she has had to fight for existence with an energy and constancy which have developed her nerve and muscle and proved her vitality beyond that of any city of modern times.³⁸

Energy . . . constancy . . . nerve . . . muscle . . . vitality—these words aptly describe Sacramento's struggle to survive the mortal flood threats of its first quarter-century. Indeed, the city secured itself by civic efforts of a herculean nature. The first task, sparked by the flood of January, 1850, was the building of a levee system. It is

not surprising that Hardin Bigelow, one of the first city fathers to take up the cause, became Sacramento's first municipal hero, because without the levee there could be no city. But this was only a beginning. Within two decades Sacramentans altered the natural environment itself by changing the course of the American River and, literally, raising the city's business district to new heights. Doomsayers living in rival cities grew silent. Sacramento had secured the benefits of its rivers, so vital to its commercial success in the nineteenth century, and freed itself of their terrors.

That the saga of confronting the floods became an important vehicle of civic self-celebration is understandable. Although the floods destroyed much property, they took remarkably few lives. Although some anguished citizens had to be rescued from their inundated homes, the lasting historical image of the events is one of civic stoicism. Having lost everything, the businessman makes a holiday out of his misfortune because his will to rebound is a greater asset than his wrecked inventory; with the city under water, the wife of a businessman urges that this is the best time to buy property.³⁹ This kind of doggedness confirmed Sacramento's moral legitimacy as a commercial and governmental center and as the major city of the valley. For this reason the great floods and the constructive energies they liberated hold an important place in California's history. With the recent development of ecological consciousness, some may be struck by the arrogance of insisting on building a city where no city had a natural right to be, but as might be said about the whole of California, the monumental achievement, however flawed, remains.

The maps on pages 8 and 12 and prints on pages 6 and the top of page 9 are courtesy the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The photos on the bottom of page 9 and on page 16 are from the California Section Picture Collection, California State Library, Sacramento. The photo on page 17 is courtesy the Sacramento Museum and History Department; on page 15, courtesy the Bancroft Library; on page 14, courtesy the Southern Pacific Company. All the others are from the CHS Library.

Notes

1. Thomas H. Thompson and Albert Augustus West, *History of Sacramento County, California* (Oakland: Thompson and West, 1880), p. 72.
2. J. Horace Culver, "Historical Sketch, 1851," reprinted in John Frederick Morse, *The First History of Sacramento City* (Sacramento: Sacramento Book Collectors Club, 1945), p. 110. Culver and Morse wrote their histories for publication in the city directories for 1851 and 1853-54 respectively. A good description of this flood is in the [Sacramento] *Placer Times*, January 19, 1850, p. 2.
3. Morse, *First History*, 62.
4. J. B. D. Stillman, *The Gold Rush Letters of J. B. D. Stillman* (Palo Alto: Lewis Osborne, 1967), p. 44; Charles E. Nagel, "A Fight for Survival: Floods, Riots, and Disease in Sacramento, 1850" (unpublished MA Thesis, Sacramento State College, 1965), pp. 78-79; Joseph A. McGowan, *History of the Sacramento Valley* (New York and West Palm Beach: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1961), 1:115.
5. Morse, *First History*, 62-63; *San Francisco Daily Alta California*, January 14, 1850, p. 1. A \$3 million estimate is reported in Nagel, "Fight for Survival," 82.
6. *Daily Alta California*, January 26, 1850, p. 2; *Placer Times*, January 26, 1850, p. 2.
7. Morse, *First History*, 62; *Placer Times*, January 19, 1850, p. 2.
8. Nagel, "Fight for Survival," 94-96.
9. Nagel, "Fight for Survival," 96-99; *Placer Times*, March 30, 1850, p. 2 and April 6, 1850, p. 2.
10. Unfortunately, the episode generated much confusion among local historians as to the precise month in which the events transpired. Some venerated historical sources inexplicably maintain the building of this emergency levee occurred a month earlier than is actually the case and prior to, instead of after, Bigelow's election to office. Morse, *First History*, p. 65, erroneously reported the flood as having been averted in March, support for which exists in a resolution in praise of Bigelow's efforts in the Sacramento City Council, Minutes, July 7, 1850, Office of the City Clerk, Sacramento, California. These are the only two primary sources pointing to March. All others place the event in April, including weather data and reports; Joseph Augustus Benton, Journal, Vol. 1, entry for April 9, 1850, Joseph Augustus Benton MSS., California State Library, Sacramento, California; Culver, "Historical Sketch," 110; and contemporary news accounts in the *Sacramento Transcript*, April 8, 1850, p. 2; April 23, 1850, p. 2; and November 29, 1850, p. 2; the *Placer Times*, April 13, 1850, p. 2 and April 22, 1850, p. 2; and the *Daily Alta California*, April 10, 1850, p. 2. The Morse account, repeated through the years and embellished upon in subsequent histories, is perpetuated in the most recent full-length city history: Thor Severson, *Sacramento, An Illustrated History*:

- 1839 to 1874 (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1973), pp. 72-73.
11. Culver, "Historical Sketch," 110.
12. Heinrich Schliemann, *Schliemann's First Visit to America, 1850-1851*, ed. by Shirley H. Weber (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 73.
13. United States District Court, Northern District of California, *The United States vs. John A. Sutter*, in *California Land Claims*, vol. 25, California State Library, Sacramento, testimony of J. R. Hardenburgh, May 31, 1860, p. 408.
14. Edmund Lorenzo Barber and George Holbrook Baker, *Sacramento Illustrated* (Sacramento: Barber and Baker, 1855; 1955 facsimile edition by the Sacramento Book Collectors Club), 64.
15. Thompson and West, *Sacramento County*, 69.
16. [Sacramento] *Daily Union*, March 9, 1852, p. 2; William Dresser to Sarah Dresser, May 1852, Dresser Family MSS., Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.
17. *Daily Union*, November 10, 1852, p. 1.
18. *Daily Union*, January 3, 1853, p. 2. This is the source from which the following description of the January flood has been taken.
19. Joseph Lamson, journal entry for December 19, 1852, in "Nine Years' Adventures in California from September 1852 to September 1866," p. 11, Joseph Lamson MSS., Bancroft Library; William Dresser, February 14, 1853, Dresser Family MSS.
20. Journal entry for January 12, 1853, in "Nine Years' Adventures," 13, Lamson MSS; McGowan, *Sacramento Valley*, 116.
21. *United States vs. Sutter*, testimony of James McClatchy, June 2, 1860, p. 431.
22. Quoted in Barbara Lagomarsino, "Early Attempts to Save the Site of Sacramento by Raising Its Business District" (unpublished MA Thesis, Sacramento State College, 1969), p. 11.
23. McGowan, *Sacramento Valley*, 116; *United States vs. Sutter*, McClatchy testimony, 429.
24. *United States vs. Sutter*, Hardenburgh testimony, 412, McClatchy testimony, 429.
25. *Daily Union*, December 11, 1861, p. 1.
26. Lagomarsino, "Early Attempts," 14-20. This thesis is the authoritative account of street-raising efforts in Sacramento.
27. Eugene Itogawa, "New Channels for the American River," in *Sketches of Old Sacramento: A Tribute to Joseph A. McGowan*, ed. by Jesse M. Smith (Sacramento: Sacramento County Historical Society, 1976), pp. 216-217.
28. *Daily Union*, December 11, 1861, p. 1. The following account is from this source unless otherwise noted.
29. Caroline Leonard Coggins, "Growing Up With Sacramento," in *Sacramento Union*, magazine section, August 13, 1939.
30. George Tisdale Bromley, *The Long Ago and the Later On* (San Francisco: A. M. Robertson, 1904), p. 57.
31. *Daily Union*, January 11, 1862, p. 3.
32. Boutwell Dunlap, "Some Facts Concerning Leland Stanford and his Contemporaries in Placer County," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 2 (October 1923): 209, reports the floating piano incident. The story is effectively debunked in Caroline Wenzel, "Finding Facts about the Stanfords in the California State Library," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 19 (September, 1940): 251.
33. *Report of the Board of Health [of Sacramento] for the Year Ending March 31, 1863* (Sacramento: James Anthony & Co., 1863), p. 4; *Daily Union*, December 11, 1861, p. 2.
34. "Specification for the Construction of the City Levee," in Minutes of June 7, 1862, Sacramento Board of Levee Commissioners, *Records, April 1862-March 1878*, p. 31, Sacramento Museum and History Commission. See also the account written by one of the commissioners at the end of 1862: Henry T. Holmes, "The Levee at Sacramento," Henry T. Holmes MSS., Bancroft Library.
35. Lagomarsino, "Early Attempts," *passim*.
36. Report of Engineer A. R. Jackson, September 6, 1862, Board of Levee Commissioners, *Records*, 99; Itogawa, "New Channels," 211.
37. Minutes of February 13 and March 22, 1878, Board of Levee Commissioners, *Records*, 464, 471.
38. *Daily Bee*, December 11, 1861, quoted in Lagomarsino, "Early Attempts," v.
39. Mary E. Ackley, *Crossing the Plains and Early Days in California* (San Francisco: by the author, 1928), p. 52.

CRUSADE OR CIVIL WAR ?

The Pullman Strike in California

Captivated by the emerging prominence of union leader Eugene V. Debs and a midwestern drama of violent confrontation between strikers and federal troops, historians of the Pullman strike of 1894 have failed the West. Understandably, they have looked at important factors contributing to this most important and disruptive strike of the late nineteenth century: severe nation-wide economic depression; deteriorating living conditions among factory workers in the "model" Pullman company town just south of Chicago, Illinois; the meteoric rise and collapse of the American Railway Union, sponsor of the strike; and the maelstrom of events following use of federal injunctions and troops which resulted in the deaths of over a dozen participants. Modern-day historians have also examined the economic, political, and legal aftereffects of the strike, including precedence for use of injunctions in labor disputes and the new stature gained by Debs, who subsequently became the foremost leader of the socialist movement in the United States.

Missing the trees for the forest, few historians have given attention to regional problems and responses to the nationwide strike. The events of the Pullman conflict varied considerably from place to place, and in many western states the dispute assimilated other highly charged issues which greatly influenced the strike's local impact. The consequences of this phenomenon proved particularly notable in California.

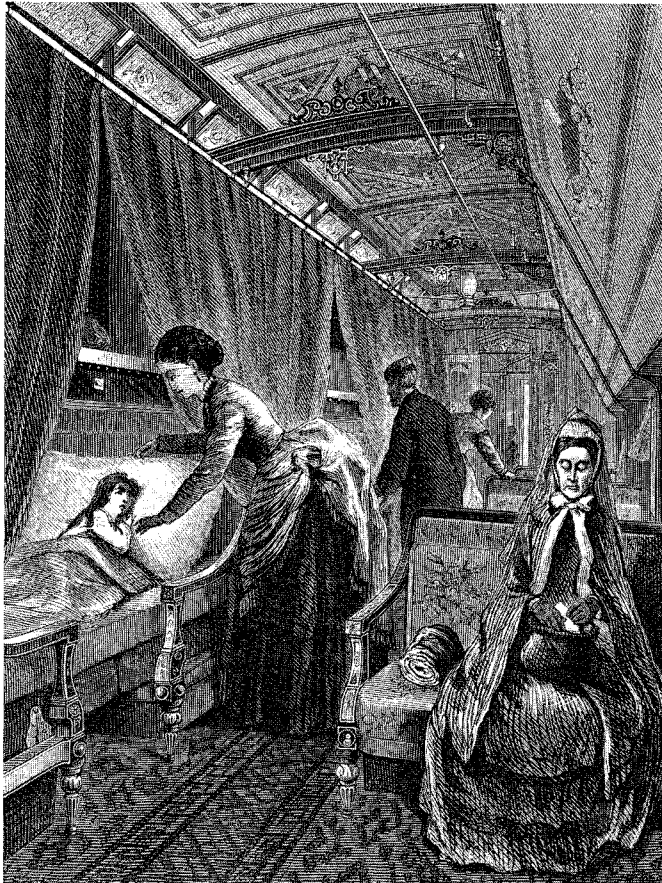
In the golden state the initial boycott of Pullman-manufactured railroad cars and the ensuing strike posed a unique dilemma. Since the 1860's the overbearing presence of the Central Pacific-Southern Pacific Railroad had embittered many Californians, and they, with much of the press, sympathized with Deb's American Railway Union (ARU) and its struggle against the rail-

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Blacksmiths at the Sacramento shops of the Central Pacific/Southern Pacific c.1890, some of the city's several thousand unskilled workers who supported the American Railway Union strike.

Luxurious interior of a railroad car manufactured in George Pullman's "model" town south of Chicago. Workers refused to service Pullman cars after he cut his employees' wages.



road. On the other hand, surging labor militancy had recently resulted in violent confrontation in such places as Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Haymarket Square in Chicago, and steel plants in Pennsylvania. Viewed in conjunction with these events, many people suspected that the Pullman boycott was part of a workingmen's conspiracy to gain economic and political power.

By mid-1894, as the Pullman strike took effect, crippling California economically and isolating it from the East, most citizens were so resentful either of the railroad's past arrogance or the workers' audacity that they made hasty and uncompromising judgments. Magnifying the railroad's culpability or fearing the merging of

unionism with anarchy, virtually every citizen and institution in the state took sides in the dispute. With the lines drawn, the strike assumed the character of a crusade—or of a civil war: labor against capital, poverty against wealth, citizen against monopoly corporation, anarchy against democracy. That the "crusade" was in fact a desperate attempt by unskilled railroad workers to secure the rights and protections of union membership is a sober after-assessment made over the distance of years. In the nineties, the issues led to confrontation which spawned violence, a situation easily equated with civil war in the fearful disquiet of the times.¹

Like a chain of falling dominoes, the business depression following the Panic of 1893 had seriously curtailed trade on the nation's railroads.² Railroad companies reacted to hard times, among other ways, by reducing orders for the opulent Pullman Palace Sleeping Cars. George M. Pullman, railroad car-builder supreme, attempted to reverse his decline in sales by lowering the price of his equipment. He accomplished this expedient by cutting his workers' wages, the largest cost incurred in producing the elaborate cars. Unabashedly he ordered several wage cuts in one year—one of which amounted to a 30 percent reduction. Coupled with high rents charged for company houses and Pullman's declaration of a normal 8 percent stock dividend shortly after the most severe wage cut, his actions caused a walkout which closed the huge Pullman factory outside of Chicago.³ For more than a month workmen attempted to arbitrate their differences with Pullman, but the puritanical industrialist refused any concessions. In desperation, the striking workmen appealed to Eugene V. Debs and his new American Railway Union (ARU) for assistance in bringing Pullman to terms.

Barely a year old, Debs' new union was virtually untested and little known nationally. A new concept in labor organization, it aimed to develop a union which represented all railway workers, including the skilled railroad craftsmen already unionized in railway brother-

hoods. In reality the infant union drew most of its members from the ranks of the unskilled, but if successful in its goal, it would have become the single most powerful union in the United States. To move ahead, the ARU needed publicity, recognition, and members. Involvement in the Pullman strike offered just such an opportunity, and although this move was a big gamble for a new organization, the prize was possible control of unionized railroad labor.⁴

Accordingly, on June 27, 1894, Debs ordered ARU members between Chicago and the Pacific Ocean to boycott the use of Pullman sleeping cars and to prevent their employment in regular train service. Debs' instructions reached California by telegraph, bringing with them the first labor dispute of national importance to affect the state. The decision also brought a direct attack on the state's largest employer, its most vital transportation link, and some would say, its biggest headache: the Central Pacific-Southern Pacific Railroad. Despotism or cornerstone of state prosperity, the railroad was the most controversial and dominant force in California's "Gilded Age."

Actually, there was little gilding on the harshness of life in 1894. Roaring boom years were a tarnished memory, and claims that California was a "Garden of Eden" seemed blatantly fraudulent. Extending the railroad to California had brought industrialization, urbanization, and many of the same pressures which already faced society in the East. Labor agitation, unemployment, fear of immigration, corporate monopoly, and corruption surfaced in the depression years following the Panic of 1893 as manifestations of frightening trends within developing industrial capitalism.

Surprisingly, by the 1890's California was the most industrialized and one of the most urbanized states in the nation.⁵ Only one-fifth of the state's population lived on California's large mechanized farms (one-half the national rate), and new immigration contributed to one of the highest urban growth rates in the country.⁶ The

By the 1890s California was the most industrialized and one of the most urbanized states in the nation.

Southern Pacific added to this phenomenal growth by providing the major communications, service, and transportation connections to the East. Population and commerce naturally concentrated at distribution and junction points along the railroad. Consequently, the railroad strike not only paralyzed transportation, but it also seriously affected the heart of the state's economy and the routine life of its cities and citizens as well.

In the then pre-eminent urban areas of California—Sacramento, San Francisco-Oakland, and Los Angeles—sympathies and actions on all levels of society were tempered and shaped by consideration of the struggle between the Southern Pacific and labor. People living in areas acutely concerned with the railroad monopoly, such as Sacramento and Oakland, made a sometimes awkward choice which generally favored the laborers. In Los Angeles, on the other hand, a city "blessed" with a competing railroad and a notoriously anti-labor press, the ARU received little, and at best, uninspired, support. Strike-related events in these three areas ran the spectrum of emotion, attitude, and violence. The strain brought by the confrontation and the public's reaction exposed important aspects of the communities' structures and revealed both the strengths and frailties in the Southern Pacific's economic and political power.

The strike's impact was heightened in California by its uniqueness, for railroad-labor relations in the state had largely been maintained on an amiable level. In fact, until the Pullman conflict there had never been a serious labor dispute in the history of the Southern Pacific Corporation. The established railway brotherhoods had en-

Company C of the national guard was among the units called up to quell the strike situation in Sacramento.

joyed the almost unprecedented confidence of the Southern Pacific, the press, and the public—a confidence that was fostered by a prevailing anti-strike sentiment, high wage rates for skilled employees, a disinterest in the closed shop, and union brotherhood insistence upon loyalty to the railroad company.⁷

Concerned with maintaining the status quo, railroad managers and brotherhood leaders were alarmed by the ARU and its goal of unifying railroad workers into one irrepressible organization. Naturally, the Southern Pacific feared the bargaining potential of this kind of union, while the brotherhoods felt their autonomy threatened. Especially frightening was the ARU's successful solicitation of unskilled workers, common laborers, and other railwaymen who were outside the organizing sphere of the railway craft unions.

Supported by the prestigious Brotherhoods of Locomotive Engineers, Conductors, Telegraphers, Dispatchers, and Trainmen, the Southern Pacific moved swiftly and decisively to prevent the ARU from gaining a foothold in California.⁸ But, in common with most railroad companies, the Southern Pacific was unable to control the dynamic growth of the ARU.

The first California chapter of the ARU was organized at Los Angeles on November 28, 1893, with membership solicited from employees of the Southern Pacific and Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroads. Both railroads refused recognition of the new union, and they dismissed and blacklisted known ARU members. Many of the blacklisted union men then went underground and secretly distributed circulars and information about the ARU around the state. In this way they were instrumental in organizing ARU locals in Northern California. By January, 1894, as the national strength of the

union increased unprecedentedly and despite attempts by the railroad to suppress its growth, ARU chapters were chartered openly in Sacramento, San Francisco, and Oakland, with a total membership of several thousand workers.⁹

As a result, on June 28, 1894, only one day after the ARU had instituted its nationwide boycott of the use of Pullman sleeping cars, Southern Pacific operations ground to a halt in California. Strikers took control of most stations and railroad yards (including the main terminals at Sacramento, Oakland, San Jose, Fresno, and Los Angeles, as well as many way-stations) and brought normal activities to a stop. Rails were greased or removed, tracks were blockaded with engines and cars, and in one instance a trestle was burned to prevent the railroad from operating trains manned with brotherhood workers. The ARU had caught the railroad unawares, but its demands that the railroad voluntarily join the Pullman boycott—in which event all other railroad operations could be continued—were promptly denounced by Southern Pacific officials. As a result regular train operations were discontinued and, along with them, the mails, freight, and overland passenger travel.¹⁰ Finally out in the open, the “irresistible” force of ARU imperatives was pitted against the “immovable” prerogatives of railroad management—an explosive situation during the hot California summer of 1894.

The boycott of Pullman cars and the ensuing strike could not have occurred at a more difficult time for California. The depression had been wrecking economic havoc for months. The state and the nation were on nerve's edge about the activities of Coxey's Army in April and May and a possible world-wide anarchist conspiracy (the president of France had been assassinated in June).¹¹ In California, summer harvest time was at hand, and the railroad was vitally needed to transport produce to the East. To these tensions and economic crises was now added the inconvenience and violence of the Pullman boycott.



As the hub of the Central Pacific-Southern Pacific network, Sacramento was immediately affected by the boycott. Although agriculture, especially wheat farming, dominated the life of the Sacramento Valley, the city itself was a key supply and distribution point. The Southern Pacific maintained its main shop facilities and one of its largest terminals in Sacramento and employed over 3,000 men out of a total urban population of approximately 30,000. Perhaps one-fifth to one-fourth of the city's population was dependent upon the railroad payroll, with merchants and other businessmen also in its economic sphere.¹²

Over 2,100 shopmen and hundreds of other railroad workers rallied to the ARU in Sacramento. Because of the shops, large engine terminal, and maintenance-of-way operations, the Sacramento work force was dominated by men who were not eligible for brotherhood membership, and consequently, the city quickly became a bastion of ARU strength. Reflective of their numbers, the strikers also received the moral support of the city's

mayor, sheriff, merchants, and what appears to have been a sizeable proportion of the citizenry. Southern Pacific's management demanded the arrest of strikers who interfered with its trains, but local officials declined to act, citing their responsibility to the community, not just the railroad.¹³ When local authorities made no move against the union, railroad lawyers from many affected companies urged federal officials to make an unprecedented move to break the deadlock. Claiming that interstate commerce and the US mail service were being interrupted—although often the railroads themselves refused to attach mail cars to trains boycotting Pullman cars—the government determined to force the strikers to return to work.¹⁴

Acting on July 2 on the orders of President Grover Cleveland, United States Attorney General Richard Olney issued instructions to federal attorneys in California and across the country to use injunctions against the ARU. In Sacramento notification of these injunctions was given to the ARU's mediation committee by US

Regular army troops were brought into Sacramento from San Francisco when national guardsmen broke ranks and joined the strikers and sympathizers.



Marshal Barry Baldwin and Southern Pacific General Superintendent J. A. Fillmore. But to their surprise, ARU strength was so secure in the area that even a force of federal marshals could not succeed in escorting a mail train out of the yards on July 3. Thwarted by the strikers, Marshal Baldwin appealed to Governor Henry E. Markham for assistance from the national guard. Markham responded quickly and ordered the national guard to furnish whatever aid was necessary to control the situation.¹⁵

Lack of adequate logistical preparation, equipment, food, and transportation arrangements for the nearly 1,000 guardsmen who were quickly activated caused confusion and bitterness among the troops as they were moved into Sacramento on the night of July 3. The presence of large groups of strikers, holiday crowds, and orders to take possession of the Sacramento railroad terminal forced the ill-prepared guardsmen into hasty action on July 4. Hampered by the press of people, the military had difficulty acting, and the ARU used the situation to its best advantage. Strikers harrangued the troops to throw down their arms, and the confusion was heightened when it became apparent that many of the guardsmen from Sacramento and Stockton were employees of the railroad, and ARU members too. Some broke ranks and marched off with strikers and sympathizers from the crowd. The remaining guardsmen, hungry and sweltering in the 105° heat of the day, stood their ground while Marshal Baldwin pleaded with the crowd to disperse. Many troopers fainted from heat prostration.¹⁶

The ineffectual, and some said mutinous, behavior of the national guard caused Marshal Baldwin to request regular army troops for use in Sacramento. A force of 500 soldiers was dispatched from San Francisco and arrived on July 11 after a cautious trip on a heavily guarded troop train.¹⁷ Between July 4 and July 11 the ARU had maintained firm control in Sacramento, and strikers were fed and sheltered by merchants and townspeople. Al-

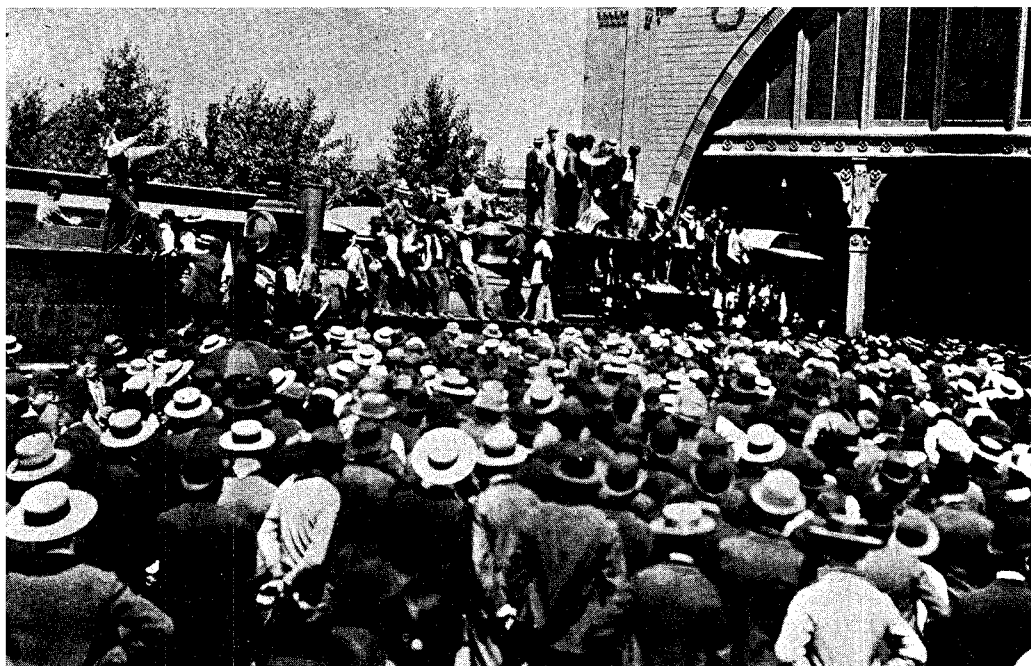
Major railroad centers were firmly in the hands of strikers, but military presence was building rapidly.

though on July 10 President Cleveland had ordered strikers throughout the United States to cease their boycott or face arrest and imprisonment, this order had no immediate effect in California. National guard troops were largely confined to camps established on the lawns of the state capitol where they engaged in much needed training exercises. In the only significant maneuver during this week, guardsmen, reinforced by naval reservists, succeeded in regaining control of the San Jose depot and yards. Otherwise, the major railroad centers in California were firmly in the hands of strikers, although the military presence was building rapidly.¹⁸

On July 11, national guard troops anxious to redeem their reputations and the newly arrived army soldiers in Sacramento were ordered to capture the Southern Pacific depot which was still held by strikers. But the ARU was one step ahead. Anticipating that the federal soldiers meant business, being advised by their attorney that resisting the army constituted treason, and believing that they could continue to impede train service because they controlled other stations down the line to Oakland, the ARU had abandoned the Sacramento terminal during the night of the tenth. When the troops arrived on the eleventh, they found the station deserted, and they quickly occupied the buildings and yards.¹⁹

During the next month of federal occupation in Sacramento, seven persons were killed either by sabotage blamed on the ARU (five people died when a troop train was derailed) or in incidents attributed to vengeful soldiers. The press and Sacramento's board of city trustees condemned the military for over-reacting to the

Standing atop a Pullman car, US Marshal Barry Baldwin harangued strikers at the Sacramento depot to allow a mail train to leave the yard.



situation in their city, and this denunciation found favor with that portion of the population which continued to support the ARU. The military forces, however, had succeeded in breaking the ARU's control of Sacramento and in re-opening the Central Pacific's transcontinental line.²⁰

With Sacramento's urban labor force dominated by railroad employees, most of whom were members of the ARU, it was not surprising the union received strong support in the city. Most railroad employees in Sacramento were shopmen who eagerly sought the benefits of ARU organization because they lived at the most vulnerable employment level. This fact undoubtedly contributed to the fervor of community support and the tenacity of the union's efforts. Unlike the Southern Pacific's managers, Sacramento's railroad workers had roots in the community which strengthened their power during the strike.

Many people also found a link between the ARU

strike and their outspoken hatred for the tyranny of the Southern Pacific monopoly. In fact, the popular support for labor evidenced in Sacramento reflected an anti-railroad campaign that had been waged in California for years. During the strike the Southern Pacific was repeatedly accused of hindering mail shipments to purposely incite government involvement in the strike.²¹ The charge cannot be substantiated, but the Southern Pacific's lack of community influence was illustrated by the refusal of local authorities to act against the strikers. Thus, the railroad's clearest option lay in forcing government action against the ARU, and whether by necessity or design the union was repressed by federal forces. A potent force of economic life, the Southern Pacific was often the arbiter and manipulator of events in California. But in this instance, Sacramentans seemed willing to suffer the strike's deprivations as long as the railroad suffered at the same time.

Throughout the initial weeks of the boycott when the

ARU dominated activity in Sacramento, rail traffic was also disrupted in the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area. Approximately 2,000 ARU strikers took control of the Oakland Mole terminal and yards, and large demonstrations erupted at Southern Pacific headquarters in San Francisco. Southern Pacific's ferries and commuter trains on both sides of the Bay were halted, and mail, freight, and passenger service to all points was severed. But in spite of these inconveniences, residents of the Bay Area, like those in Sacramento, generally blamed the railroad for the disruption caused by the boycott.²²

Much of the support for the ARU came from the Bay Area's large and well-organized labor force. The strike was particularly popular among workers who disliked the powerful Southern Pacific and felt a common bond with the struggling ARU. The San Francisco Labor Council, the Workingmen's League, the local chapter of the Knights of Labor, and the Socialist Labor party all supported the strikers, and members of these groups often bolstered attendance at ARU meetings. The San Francisco press was also busy producing anti-Southern Pacific propaganda, offering almost unanimous support for the union effort.²³

In Oakland, the mayor refused to order city police to move against the strikers, and many merchants supported the ARU in order to protest the Southern Pacific's control of the city waterfront. In other gestures of support, a ladies relief organization established a hospital for strikers, while a group of non-railroad workmen formed a "militia" company to aid the ARU.²⁴

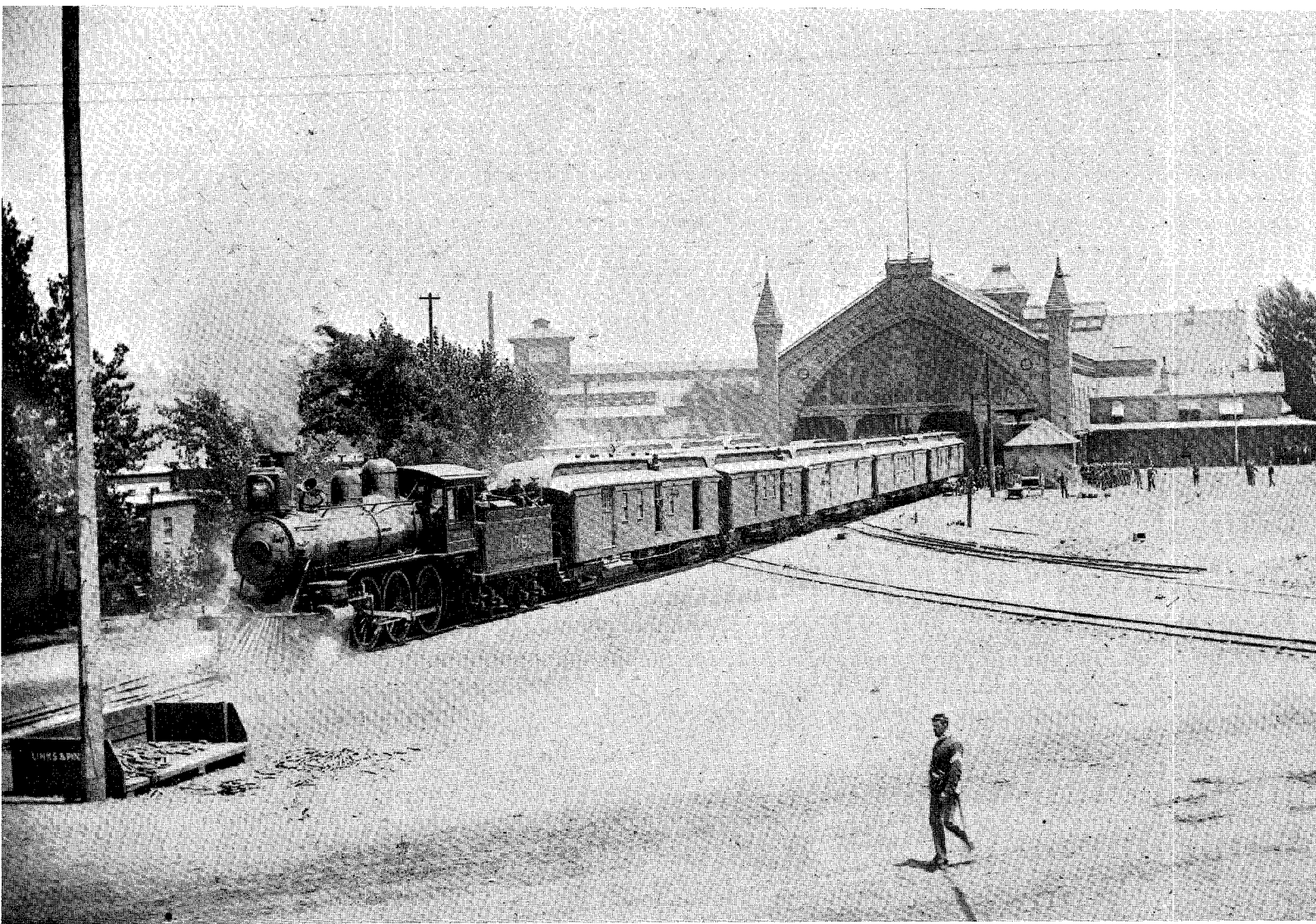
It was apparent from the beginning of the strike that its consequences in San Francisco-Oakland paled in comparison to its effects in Sacramento. Certainly the potential for serious violence existed, and tensions and tempers frequently flared, but the situation never reached

the proportions it did in the capital city. As the principal terminal of the Southern Pacific system, Sacramento was the natural focal point of ARU activities. In fact, by cutting transcontinental and northbound traffic at Sacramento, the rail line from Sacramento to Oakland became insignificant. Only after troops displaced strikers holding the station in Sacramento did the ARU attempt to consolidate its gains in San Francisco-Oakland, but its tardy efforts were too late.

By the time the limelight shifted to the Bay Area, the public had wearied of the lack of normal train and ferry service. An abundance of water transportation somewhat eased the problems of carrying on business, and antipathy toward the railroad held strong, but merchants and travelers around the Bay were anxious to restore rail operations after a month of inactivity. Although the ARU made an attempt to maintain control of the rail lines, it lost hope when other labor organizations discontinued their support activities. With the handwriting clearly on the wall, strikers in the Bay Area yielded Southern Pacific property amid a flurry of die-hard sabotage and angry recriminations which hurt their cause.

The ARU possessed neither the financial backing nor an established organization necessary to withstand a prolonged strike. While union officials had hoped for a quick victory in the controversy, each additional day worked to the railroad's advantage. With vigorous public support of the kind received in Sacramento, the ARU was able to operate in spite of union shortcomings. In the Bay Area, however, the ARU was only a small segment of the labor force, and strikers had no significant community ties to bolster their cause. Demoralized by union defeats, attempts to raise support for ARU efforts failed, and the boycott rapidly collapsed.

The least dramatic but most unique strike events in California occurred at Los Angeles. With a population of approximately 100,000 in 1894, Los Angeles was the only major city in the state to boast two transcontinental



railroads: the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe. As in Sacramento, the mainstay of the region was agriculture, the city boasted little industry, and the regional economy was dependent on railroad service. More in common with the Bay Area, however, was the diversity of Los Angeles' labor force which was not dominated by railwaymen. The city's competing railway lines also removed it from the mercy of one rapacious company.²⁵

Although the first California chapter of the ARU had been chartered in Los Angeles, it was immediately suppressed by the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe railroads. The ARU organization in Los Angeles was just rebuilding itself at the time the Pullman strike was called. Perhaps 1,500 to 2,000 Southern California employees of both railroads were active in the ARU during the boycott of Pullman cars, but their discipline and organization did not match that maintained in the Northern California chapters. Furthermore, there was less com-

elling reason to strike in Los Angeles because the depression of 1893 had not notably affected the area. In fact, when the ARU went out on strike in July, Los Angeles was in the midst of a prosperous recovery after the economic collapse of 1889-1890.²⁶

While Angelenos had no love for the Southern Pacific, particularly for its attempt to monopolize harbor facilities, the existence of another railroad and the benefits resulting from railway competition were enthusiastically accepted. However, wild rumors and hysterical overreaction to the boycott resulted in flares of excitement.

Because both of Los Angeles' railroads were embroiled in the ARU strike, civic authorities believed serious violence might erupt. The Chamber of Commerce and many merchants feared the strike would jeopardize Los Angeles' economic recovery, and the *Los Angeles Times* fanned the fires of hysteria about anarchist conspiracy. When the US marshal for Southern California devel-

The first train left Sacramento's Southern Pacific depot on July 11 after the national guard recaptured the station abandoned by ARU strikers.

oped a serious illness and proved unable to discharge his duties, local officials demanded prompt action. In response, US Attorney General Olney prevailed upon President Cleveland to order troops into Southern California. On July 1, marching orders for federal soldiers were issued before overt violence or large demonstrations of any kind had occurred.²⁷

Rumors about armed ARU resistance resulted in six infantry companies being dispatched to Los Angeles in heavily guarded troop trains. Arriving in warm and tranquil Los Angeles on July 4, the soldiers encountered a calm which prevailed for the remainder of the boycott, marred only by insignificant vandalism. Fears that 5,000 strikers had armed themselves to resist the army proved absolutely unfounded.²⁸ The notoriously anti-labor *Times* attributed this lack of serious trouble in Southern California to the unequivocal use of troops and to the wisdom of the local population.²⁹ While the troops may have had a moderating effect, it is more likely that the unprepared ARU organization and the anti-labor suspicions of the Los Angeles community kept the strike from reaching serious proportions.

Although the ARU received the support of the Los Angeles Council of Labor and other groups, it waged a fruitless battle in Southern California. Labor organizations in general were viewed with skepticism by many residents and certainly by the influential *Times* and other newspapers. During the boycott the *Los Angeles Evening Express* seriously implied that all ARU supporters were anarchists, while the *Times* labeled the strike open rebellion between capital and labor.³⁰ The anti-railroad sentiments which served to forge a bond with the ARU effort in Northern California were fearfully or contemptuously directed against the union in Los Angeles.

Once military forces had gained control in Sacramento and Los Angeles, troops were quickly placed at nearly all stations along the Central Pacific-Southern Pacific lines. By July 20, with military forces protecting railroad property throughout the state, ARU officials

Rumors about armed ARU resistance resulted in six infantry companies being dispatched to Los Angeles.

recognized defeat and instructed their men to return to work. The railroad quickly restored service, but troops were kept at their stations for another month in California, longer than in any other part of the United States.³¹

The Pullman strike was over, but its dramatic and often tragic events served to highlight the despair felt by many Californians in the nineties. Involving more than an isolated segment of society, the boycott raised fears and frustrating questions about the nation's social inequalities.

With railway brotherhood benefits limited to a select and highly skilled minority of craftsmen, the unskilled worker's motivation for ARU membership and support was clear. First, skilled railroad workers' wages reacted less to the downward trend caused by the depression of 1893 than those of unskilled workers who already lived close to the margin of subsistence and who were placed in jeopardy by the slightest reduction in wages or amount of work.³² Second, the gulf between wages paid to the skilled brotherhood worker and the common laborer was cavernous. Although the Southern Pacific did not make wage cuts as drastic as other railroads during the depression, the wages of its skilled brotherhood employees were held constant while the unskilled laborers and trackmen faced importunate reductions. The Southern Pacific was also slow in meeting its payroll due to depression-induced stringencies, and it dismissed some employees to trim expenses.³³ All of these actions proved devastating to unskilled and unorganized workers and drove them to seek the protection of the ARU.

The ARU established itself and carried on its strike in urban areas with major concentrations of railroad labor. In Sacramento, where unskilled railway workers formed the majority of industrial wage earners, the organizational efforts of the ARU were particularly successful. Backed by considerable popular support in the state capital, the ARU developed a strong membership and prosecuted the Pullman strike with discipline and grim determination. In San Francisco-Oakland and Los Angeles, where railroad laborers did not exercise as significant a social influence, the effects of the Pullman strike were noticeably less dramatic. In the Bay Area, support from labor organizations and a sympathetic public contributed to the early successes of the ARU but faded as the strike progressed. The ARU floundered hopelessly in Los Angeles where labor unions were viewed with suspicion and the government acted swiftly against them.

Nevertheless, rancorous hostility toward the Southern Pacific was a strong ally of the ARU throughout the strike. Except in Los Angeles, the railroad was often considered a bigger threat than the ARU, or at least a more familiar enemy. The boycott intensified the almost traditional enmity Californians felt for the Southern Pacific and, in the examples of Sacramento and Oakland civic officials, often revealed surprising weaknesses in the railroad's local power and influence.³⁴ Even the national guard proved unreliable when first called to duty in Sacramento, and only federal officials, anxious about the national consequences of the Pullman disorder, gave the Southern Pacific the support it wanted and needed.

The impact of the 1894 Pullman strike in California was enormous. For the first time, cities resorted to using state and federal troops to maintain law and order.

Widespread violence killed seven persons and wounded scores of others. Railroad workers lost an estimated \$1,000,000 in wages during the heart of a depression, while the Southern Pacific lost approximately \$545,000 in net revenues.³⁵ The effects on state and urban economies and on business, farmers, and families were too great to be determined. Perhaps most importantly, repercussions of the boycott and other railroad controversies dominated state politics well into the twentieth century.

While public opinion during the boycott was influenced by many things—amounts of inconvenience and violence, for instance—the results of the 1894 state and local elections offered strong evidence of the nature of popular sentiment. The Populist party, made up largely of farmers who were especially at the mercy of railroad transportation, actively supported the ARU during the strike, expecting the railroad workers to vote the People's party ticket in 1894. Populists organized mass meetings, raised money, and further denounced Governor Markham for activating the national guard to suppress the strikers.³⁶

The Populists gained their greatest ally when Adolph Sutro agreed to run for mayor of San Francisco on the Populist ticket which urged nationalization of the railroads. However, leaders of all the major parties advocated anti-monopoly platforms, and despite platform inconsistencies which the Populists readily pointed out, the impact of the Populist campaign was diminished. The emotional reaction created by the strike and other railroad issues nevertheless swept Sutro into office in the fall of 1894 and gave Populists sixty-two victories in county races.³⁷ Although many important positions were not captured by Populist candidates, an anti-railroad Democratic governor was elected, and there was not a single state or congressional race in which the Populist vote, added to the Democratic tally, would not have been victorious. In San Francisco, Alameda, and Sacramento counties, Populist and Democratic showings

Spikes were removed from the rails in Yolo County, causing this train wreck.



were particularly impressive. Even in Los Angeles, where Republicans held their greatest plurality, a combined Populist-Democratic vote would have won handily. In sum, the results of the elections of 1894 revealed the magnitude of anti-Southern Pacific sympathy, but the splitting of votes between Democrats and Populists resulted in victory for relatively few anti-railroad candidates. The railroad-supported Republican party, on the other hand, gained firm control of the state legislature.³⁸

The year 1894 marked a turning point in the Southern Pacific's political policy. For many years prior, W. W. Stow, Collis P. Huntington's political

strategist, had shifted railroad support to whichever political party had the best chance of electoral success and offered the most accommodating relations with the railroad. Stow retired in late 1893, and just months prior to the Pullman strike William F. Herrin was chosen as his successor. Believing that Stow's approach would not work in the increasingly complex politics of the 1890's, Herrin opted to consolidate an unassailable base of power through control of one party. He created the political bureau as part of the Southern Pacific's Legal Department and attached the incredible financial resources and power of the Southern Pacific to the ascend-

Armed troopers escorted trains down the lines after the opening of the Central Pacific line.



ing dominance of the Republican party.³⁹ The success of his political operations was strikingly evident in the legislative control established in the election of 1894 and by the Republican dominance of state politics that lasted for the next forty years.

Within one month's time in 1894, a significant if obscure event in California's history unfolded. For most people the Pullman boycott was a costly experience, even a dismal failure. Perhaps the theory which suggests "power which is not legitimized tends to be either coercive or manipulative"⁴⁰ can account for the actions of both the Southern Pacific and the ARU during the Pullman conflict. Unable to exert social influence to match its economic power, the Southern Pacific sought, and won, government assistance in defeating the ARU and restoring operations. Furthermore, anti-railroad sympathies inflamed by the strike compelled the Southern Pacific to embark on a political strategy designed to solidify its position in future years, regardless of unfavorable public opinion.

Strikers were also forced to resort to coercive tactics in the pitched contest. Finding that their base of public support weakened as the inconvenient boycott wore on, ARU strikers chose violence and sabotage, or at least were unable to control it, and thereby jeopardized the union's tenuous ties with California's citizenry. After the strike collapsed, the ARU nearly disappeared, never again to play a role in railway union organization. While over 130 California union officials and strikers were arrested and subsequently blacklisted by the railroad, most strikers, if not strike leaders, eventually returned to their old jobs. In the end relations between the Southern Pacific and its employees returned largely to their pre-strike status.⁴¹

Although the ARU organization was mortally wounded, the leaders of the strike never publicly admitted defeat. Strike leaders had no hopes of regaining their former jobs, and local ARU chapters limped along in order to defend members who had been arrested. In

Los Angeles, six ARU members who were found guilty of interfering with the mails were sentenced to eighteen months in prison, but they were eventually pardoned by President Cleveland in 1896.⁴² Of the nearly one hundred thirty strikers arrested in Northern California, two of the accused were arbitrarily selected for trial in San Francisco. The result of this lengthy trial was a hung jury, and they were released. The railroad's blacklist kept these strikers from gaining employment until 1896, when the state labor commissioner intervened with the railroad and the US attorney general to have both the charges and the blacklist dropped.⁴³

The Pullman boycott, which began as a dispute of factory workers in Illinois, found its most fervent followers in the Golden State. In California railroad workers carried on the strike after it was ended elsewhere in the nation, and even after the Pullman workers had returned to their jobs. When Debs called a superfluous convention to end the strike in August, 1894, he was only able to muster fifty-three delegates, nearly all of whom were from California and other western states.⁴⁴ If the Pullman boycott was a crusade for the rights of unskilled workers, strikers had to be satisfied with minor Populist party victories in the voting booth. If it was a civil war between anarchists and upstanding citizens, the railroad and the government won by crushing the ARU. The basic causes of the workers' discontent—exploitation, poverty, and lack of effective organization and representation—were not resolved. These questions of social justice would await other remedies, just as Hiram Johnson and a reform government would later confront the lingering domination of the Southern Pacific railroad in California.

The photos on pages 21 and 34 are courtesy the Southern Pacific Company. Those on pages 26, 30, and 33 are courtesy the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The engraving on page 22 is from Charles Nordhoff's *California: A Book for Travellers and Settlers* (1872). The photo on page 28 is reproduced from *The "City Guard": A History of Company "B"* (1895). The photo on page 25 is from the CHS Library.

Notes

1. The mood of fear that was engendered by socialist and anarchist movements at this time has been, perhaps, best examined by Barbara Tuchman in *The Proud Tower* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), pp. 109-110, 494-496.
2. Harold U. Faulkner, *American Economic History* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publications, 1954), p. 520; US Interstate Commerce Commission, *Eighth Annual Report for the Year Ending December 1, 1894* (Washington, D.C., 1894), pp. 68-69.
3. Readers are directed to the US Congress, Senate, *United States Strike Commission Report*, Sen. Doc. 7, 53 Cong. 3 sess. (1895), for details of the situation at the Pullman factory.
4. Almont Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike: the Story of a Unique Experiment and of a Great Labor Upheaval* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 110-2; Donald L. McMurry, "Labor Policies of the General Managers Association of Chicago, 1886-1894," *Journal of Economic History*, 11 (1953): 174.
5. Harvey S. Perloff, et al., *Regions, Resources, and Economic Growth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1960), pp. 168, 182-183.
6. *Ibid.*, 128; David B. Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California, 1873-1898," *Southern California Quarterly*, 52 (June, 1970): 97.
7. Grace H. Stimson, *The Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), pp. 161-163 (hereinafter referred to as *Labor in Los Angeles*); California Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Seventh Biennial Report, 1895-6* (Sacramento, 1896), p. 148; Gerald G. Eggert, *Railroad Labor Disputes: The Beginnings of Federal Strike Policy* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. 6 (hereinafter referred to as *Railroad Labor Disputes*); Ira B. Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1935), p. 219 (hereinafter referred to as *Labor Movement in California*).
8. Eggert, *Railroad Labor Disputes*, 157.
9. Stimson, *Labor in Los Angeles*, 164-165; California Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Seventh Biennial Report, 1895-6*, pp. 141-142.
10. A complete narrative record of the strike may be found in William W. Ray, "The Great Strike of 1894: The Pullman Boycott in California" (unpublished MA thesis, California State University, Hayward, 1972).
11. Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1968), p. 251; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, May 3, 1894, p. 2, and May 18, 1894, p. 1.
12. Joseph A. McGowan, *History of the Sacramento Valley*, I (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1961): 244; Myrtle S. Lord, *A Sacramento Saga: Fifty Years of Achievement—Chamber of Commerce Leadership* (Sacramento: Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, 1946), p. 7.
13. US War Department, *Annual Report for the Secretary of War for the Year 1894* (Washington, D.C., 1894), p. 112 (hereinafter referred to as *Annual Report, 1894*); McGowan, *History of the Sacramento Valley*, II: 100; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 1, 1894, p. 1.
14. US Congress, House, *Report of the Postmaster General*, Exec. Doc. #1, Part 4, 53 Cong., 30 sess. (Washington, D.C., 1895), pp. 396-399; US Department of Justice, *Appendix to the Annual Report of the Attorney General of the United States for the Year 1896* (Washington, D.C., 1896), p. 17 (hereinafter referred to as *Appendix*). Eggert, *Railroad Labor Disputes*, examines at length the legal reasoning which led to the widespread use of injunctions and vigorous federal involvement in the Pullman strike.
15. *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 2, 1894, p. 3, and July 4, 1894, pp. 1, 3; Filmer, et al, *The "City Guard": A History of Company "B" First Regiment Infantry, N.G.C. During the Sacramento Campaign, July 3 to 26, 1894*, pp. 15-16 (hereinafter referred to as *City Guard*). For a fascinating record of Governor Markham's activities and thoughts during the strike, the reader is referred to the Huntington Library, Henry Markham Collection, Box XX, Ninety-Six Telegrams Relating to the Strike of 1894.
16. Filmer, et al, *City Guard*, 16, 26, 34-35, 64, 92; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 4, 1894, p. 1, and July 5, 1894, pp. 3-4; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, pp. 25-26. The *Sacramento Daily Record-Union* estimated the crowd, excluding strikers and military, to number approximately 5,000.
17. US War Department, *Annual Report, 1894*, pp. 111-112; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 11, 1894, pp. 2-3.
18. Filmer, et al, *City Guard*, 77-78, 90-91; Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles* (New York: S. A. Russell, 1956), p. 122; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 10, 1894, p. 1.
19. US War Department, *Annual Report, 1894*, pp. 112-113; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, p. 22.
20. US War Department, *Annual Report, 1894*, pp. 113-114; Yellen, *American Labor Struggles*, 131; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 17, 1894, p. 1.
21. *Oakland Enquirer*, June 29, 1894, p. 2; *San Francisco Examiner*, June 28, 1894, p. 6; Eggert, *Railroad Labor Disputes*, 176; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, 29, 33.
22. *Oakland Enquirer*, July 5, 1894, p. 5 and July 29, 1894, p. 1; Frank A. Leach, *Recollections of a Newspaperman* (San Francisco: Samuel Levinson, 1917), p. 267; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, 25-26.
23. Robert E. L. Knight, *Industrial Relations in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1900-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 33 (hereinafter referred to as *Industrial Relations*); *Oakland Enquirer*, June 30, 1894, p. 8, and July 1, 1894, p. 1; US War Department, *Annual Report, 1894*, 114.
24. Leach, *Recollections of a Newspaperman*, 271; *Oakland Enquirer*, July 13, 1894, p. 1, Extra Edition; Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California, 1873-1898," p. 103.

25. Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles 1850-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 67, 121 (hereinafter referred to as *Fragmented Metropolis*); Glenn S. Dumke, *The Boom of the Eighties* (San Marino: Huntington Library Publications, 1944), p. 270; Charles D. Willard, *A History of the Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, California from its Foundation, September, 1888, to the Year 1900* (Los Angeles: Kingsley-Barnes and Neumer Co., 1899), p. 96 (hereinafter referred to as *Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles*).
26. Willard, *Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles*, 153-154; Fogelson, *Fragmented Metropolis*, 79.
27. US War Department, *Annual Report*, 1894, p. 111; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, 19-20; Cross, *Labor Movement in California*, 277.
28. US War Department, *Annual Report*, 1894, pp. 111, 115; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, 22-23.
29. *Los Angeles Times*, July 23, 1894, p. 1.
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Francis
of
the flowers

an appreciation of
John Francis
Saunders

Charles Francis Saunders dedicated *Under the Sky in California* "to the tenderfoot whom California loves to educate." For some thirty years after his own tenderfoot days in 1902, the year he arrived in California and went botanizing in the little desert community of Palm Springs, Saunders was himself the most delightful of educators. His books on California and the Southwest, written in a pleasant conversational style, are an admirable introduction to the Pueblo Indians, the California Missions, and the flora of the West.

Saunders was born to Quaker parents in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, on July 12, 1859, and educated in Friends' schools. As one writer points out, his books are permeated with the Quaker spirit. They "manifest the qualities that are fundamentally Friendly: a calm, quiet strength, integrity, tolerance, moderation and cheerful kindness and simplicity, the love of nature and of healing silences, and a simple impregnable faith."¹

From his earliest years Saunders wanted to be an author. By the time he was thirteen he had written "a tragedy in five acts . . . and a satire entitled 'New Jersey' in the meter of Hiawatha."² After graduating from high school he began work as a junior clerk for Peter Wright and Sons, a Philadelphia shipping firm with which he was associated for twenty-five years. Evenings he tried writing fiction but found it hard to imagine plots, so he turned to essays and descriptive articles. On lunch hours and on Saturdays after work, he explored the city and wrote accounts of passing landmarks—old brick houses being used commercially, churches being scaffolded, decaying taverns offering old-world flavor.

In 1888 Saunders formed a walking club with two of his friends, Henry Troth, a photographer, and Elisabeth

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The author acknowledges with thanks permission granted by the Huntington Library to quote from material in the Charles Francis Saunders and Mira C. Saunders Collection.

Hallowell, a talented artist who had studied with Howard Pyle. Over the next two years the friends made numerous excursions to picturesque old inns near Philadelphia, and they collaborated on a manuscript "Inns and Outs," written by Saunders and illustrated by the other two members of The Triangle.

Among the three friends, Elisabeth Hallowell was known as the Botanist because of "a rare ability to recognize a blackberry bush at forty yards."³ Saunders had never shown any interest in botany, he once told a reporter, beyond choosing a flower for his buttonhole. When he was about thirty-two, however, he heard a lecture which changed the direction of his life. Many years later he expressed his appreciation to the lecturer, the noted botanist Joseph T. Rothrock of the University of Pennsylvania:

One night in Philadelphia—I forget the year, but it may have been 1891—I dropped in at one of your University Extension Course lectures on botany, and though I had until then had only the most passing interest in plants, my fancy was so caught by your engaging presentation of the subject that I attended the rest of the course, and a subsequent one designed to familiarize your class with the use of a manual of botany. Thus I was provided with a key to the intelligent use of the plant world, and the pursuit of botany has ever since been one of my keenest pleasures.⁴

Inspired by Rothrock's lectures, Saunders spent many holidays botanizing. He made walking trips through the countryside from the Green Mountains of Vermont to the Appalachians in North Carolina. "At night," he told a friend, "I would put up at farm houses and mountain cabins, and was an enigma to the people. The only reason for a being of my sort to exist was that I must be an herb doctor!"⁵

He always carried a few pencil stubs in his pocket and a little book for the notes he jotted down in his small, neat handwriting. With good Quaker thrift, he wrote in old deposit books, address books, and date books or on bits of paper held together with a straight pin. The familiar caught his attention as well as the unusual. An



Charles Francis Saunders slicing the fruit of an Opuntia he started from the remnant of an old hedge at Mission San Gabriel.

With the first frosts comes the vanguard of winter tourists to Southern California; and the streets of a dozen little cities that make a bid for tourist trade arouse themselves as a drought-stricken country-side brightens up after rain. Shops deserted during the long, dry days of summer now run up their shades and blossom out into all sorts of allurements for the tourists' patronage. There are, for instance, windows full of California and Mexican gems—tourmalines, opals, moonstones, turquoises, and sardonyx; and beside them are trays of Navajo silver bracelets, buckles and rings, and abalone brooches, cuff-buttons, paper cutters and what not, in all colors of the sunset and more. Navajo blankets blaze in doorways and Indian baskets in designs both aboriginal and sophisticated, catch the eye at every turn. The bidders for the cheaper trade sort over their last season's tarantulas and scorpions, mounting them on clean pasteboards, and dust off their left over trap-door spider's nests and horned toads. In the book stores, Mission photographs are put nearer the door, and "Ramona"—perennial best seller in Southern California—is stacked up on the counter; while every art-shop with its picture of golden poppies and scarlet pepper-berries, fuzzy eucalyptus blossoms and fiery poinsettias, becomes a sort of Hesperian *hortus siccus*. Chinese and Japanese shops spring up over night with their punky smell of the Orient, their alluring dress-goods and potteries and carvings, their devils and dragons and bald-headed old men in bric-à-brac, and their exquisite teacups and squat teapots, world without end. The streets thicken daily with automobiles until well after New Year's, and the old residenter who knows most of the permanent population by heart, finds rare entertainment in the new faces that each day brings. Pretty girls in the latest Eastern thing in hats; elderly ladies of comfortable embonpoint, with lorgnettes and lapdogs; stout old gentlemen clean-shaven and florid, with Scotch bottoms to their shoes, bespeaking a solid footing in bank directorates; nervous, dyspeptic-looking "Big Business" presidents grudgingly taking a little relaxation by the doctor's orders; young bloods, without hats and in white flannels, talking golf, polo and motor-cars—every day you see these types and many another, taking the air and enjoying the sun from November till the lambs of March are skipping again in Eastern fields, when they begin to vanish away.

from *Under the Sky in California* (1913)

early notebook, dated 1898, has a charming account of the common grasses and the observation, "We lose much pleasure by failing to pay more attention than we do to the smaller sorts of flowers. The flies and spiders are wiser . . . than we."⁶

For several years Saunders wrote about his country walks in a column for the *Philadelphia Record*. He contributed to many botanical journals which published articles of popular appeal. He also wrote verse which appeared in several magazines, and from 1894 to 1897 he edited and published *The United Friend*, a journal he founded in hopes of bringing together various factions of Quakerism.

In 1902 Saunders married Elisabeth Moore Hallowell, the artist-botanist of "Inns and Outs." Taking leave of absence from work, he traveled with his wife to California in hopes that the climate would benefit her fragile health. One of the first places they visited was the little desert outpost of Palm Springs where they discovered the pleasures of camping in the desert. Saunders studied plant life in the nearby canyons, traveling with a horse and buggy he rented for two dollars a day. For a naturalist familiar only with eastern flora, the desert was a revelation. In the words of his Palm Springs friend, the artist Carl Eytel, it must have been "*one grand Fiesta, a kind of wild flower-intoxication without the effects of boot-legging or headache.*"⁷

Delighted by "mountain, desert, cañon and flowery plain,"⁸ Francis and Elisabeth Saunders decided to make their home in Southern California, but they returned East for a brief period, and from 1903 to 1905 Saunders was secretary of the Philadelphia Commercial Exchange. In 1906 he and his wife settled in Pasadena, moving to the California bungalow at 580 North Lake Avenue where he lived for thirty-five years and where he wrote the many articles and books which brought him fame as a sensitive observer of California and the Southwest.

Saunders's first book, published in 1904, was a volume of verse, *In a Poppy Garden*, dedicated to his wife and



Supersensitive souls have told us more than once that they can stand most mixtures in California's landscaping adventures until it comes to Palms; these, they say, with a shudder, these are the unpardonable sin. Nevertheless, a campaign in the Golden State to prohibit advertising would have about as much chance of success as one to forbid a Californian's adorning his fifty-foot lawn with a couple of Canary Island Date Palms. Lolling in his shirt sleeves beneath those generous fronds, he is dead sure he is in Los Angeles, not Oshkosh, and that is what he wants to be certain of.

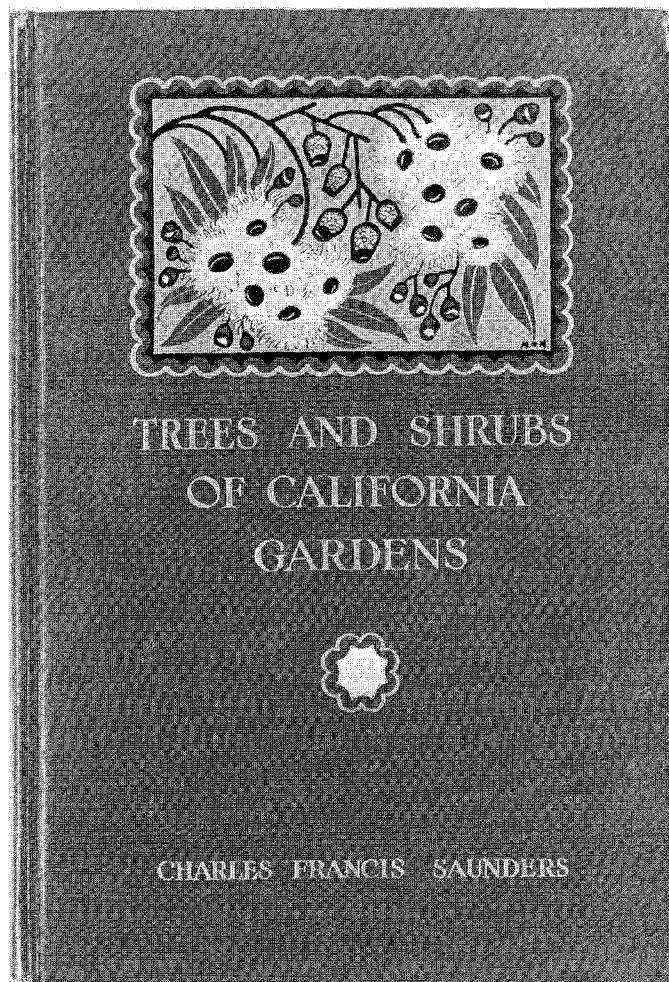
from *Trees and Shrubs of California Gardens* (1926)

Saunders in 1902 with the horse and buggy he rented from Dr. Wellwood Murray for botanical excursions to Andreas, Palm, and Chino canyons.

My neighbor the Professor is on more intimate terms with the plants of his garden than any other amateur I know.

"Why," says he, in one of those enthusiastic outbursts that particularly endear him to his friends, "I should consider it disgraceful business to be living cheek by jowl with this fascinating company of the Lord's creations that gladden me hourly with their gifts of beauty and fragrance, and yet know less about them than the unlettered birds do who nest in their twigs and harvest their seeds. If I am to take a plant into my family I want to be able to call it by name and know everything obtainable concerning it, past and present. Then I can look it in the face, as one creature of the Lord to another."

from *Trees and Shrubs of California Gardens* (1926)



Eucalyptus flowers decorate the binding of one of Saunder's books.

illustrated by her. The following year he wrote the descriptive text for *California Wild Flowers*, an attractive little portfolio with twelve of his wife's watercolor sketches. Elisabeth Saunders died in 1910, and Saunders dedicated his next book to her memory. *A Window in Arcady* (1911), compiled from nature articles in the *Philadelphia Record* and *The Churchman*, describes the quiet countryside which he and his wife had enjoyed on the East Coast. The book marked a turning point in his career. From then on, California and the Southwest inspired his writing.

Indian ethnologist Frederick Webb Hodge praised Saunders's first book on the West, *The Indians of the Terraced Houses* (1912), for its sympathetic description of the Pueblo culture. Saunders was indignant that the federal government would preserve the ancient cliff dwellings and at the same time promote educational policies that helped extinguish Pueblo culture. In a notebook kept during his extensive tour of the pueblos in 1909, he suggested that the Pueblo Indians be allowed to develop "along the lines which they themselves have started and wonderfully continued till Washington discovered them."⁹ One of the Indians with whom he corresponded sent Saunders his best rabbit stick as a gift "because you are a good man."¹⁰

In 1913 Saunders published *Under the Sky in California*, based on his excursions from Monterey to Palm Canyon and across to "unexplored Catalina."¹¹ Copies of the book were given as premiums to *Sunset* magazine subscribers, and it remained in print for a quarter of a century. The artist Eytel was charmed by the chapter on the Colorado Desert and wrote, "You are a benefactor to California and especially to Palm Springs which you have honored by a very fine description of its charms. . . . I like the true and clear way of your book. . . . I believe it will help to establish again the romantic travel a foot or a wagon instead of by automobil."¹² By 1926 Saunders was lamenting the invasion of the motor car, but he wrote, "The 'real California' still lives, and some-

Artist Elisabeth Hallowell Saunders,
first wife of Charles Francis Saunders, at
their Pasadena home around 1906.



times you find her just under the barbed wire fence that shuts out the hurrying highway.”¹³

Saunders wrote two other popular guides, *Finding the Worth While in California* (1916) and *Finding the Worth While in the Southwest* (1918). The first book describes an institution still newsworthy in 1916, “a peculiar style of restaurant known as the cafeteria (properly pronounced *cafetareéa*), in which all dishes are displayed before the eye and one is one’s own waiter. . . . You pay for each individual item and for half a dollar you may have the best in the land.”¹⁴

It was in *The Southern Sierras of California* (1923) that Saunders achieved a timeless book on the California landscape. In it he united his love of the mountains, of native plants, and of the history associated with both. As he said in his preface, it is a “kindly, human quality rather than scientific facts about rocks and glacial evidences” that he wishes to convey. Like John Muir he preferred a saunter to a hike, and he takes the reader on unhurried walks through the foothills and mountains of Southern California. He is the best of companions—an enthusiast with a wealth of knowledge, a wry sense of humor, and a relaxed conversational style. He laughs at himself as a “sentimental herborizer”¹⁵ but he is also, as he describes C. C. Parry, “one of the most genial and lovable of naturalists.”¹⁶

Saunders wrote seven books about trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. His *Useful Wild Plants of the United States and Canada*, originally published in 1920, was reissued as a paperback in 1976 for a new generation interested in living off the land. The Huntington Library, San Marino, has a copy of the original edition inscribed by the author, “To you, dear Miss Culin, who have been the means of affording so many of us such pleasant adventures among the wild plants.” This was Mira Barrett Culin, the M.B.C. to whom *The Southern Sierras of California* was dedicated. The couple shared many interests, including a love of gardening—it was at the Pasadena Garden Club that they first met—and they were

An advertisement for Bullock's
department store from the Los Angeles
Evening Express, March 30, 1927.

The FLOWERS of CALIFORNIA

by Charles Francis Saunders

AUTHOR OF "WITH THE FLOWERS AND TREES OF CALIFORNIA"

Every month in the year wild flowers are blooming in California somewhere, though not everywhere. Hard upon the first liberal rains of autumn, the wild currant unfolds its lovely pink racemes in warm canyon mouths, and on southward-facing hills the crimson eardrops of the fuchsia-flowered gooseberry sparkle like points of fire amid the freshening green of the chaparral. To speak of winter in the Southern California valleys is a concession to the almanac. What we call winter is really spring's vanguard, now and then halted, to be sure, but only to advance again. No lover of Flora can afford to miss frequent trips afield during the winter months. Even in mid-December there will normally be bright days of hot sunshine when the poppies open wide their cups of gold, and in damp pockets of the woods we are thrilled by the delicate fragrance of the dentaria's rosy white blossoms, the "milkmaids" of children's speech. Then, too, and in January, the manzanita decks its ruddy branches with urn-shaped flowers of purest white, while upon many a hillside the sheeted bloom of the earliest wild lilac lies like a light snowfall.

Granted a normal rainfall, February sees well upon its way the floral pageant which culminates, so far as the valley and mesa country is concerned, in March, April and May. Then is the choicest floral spoil of the year. Blue brodiaeas and mariposa tulips of indescribable beauty nod among the tall wild grasses; brown and yellow pansies, sun cups, popcorn flowers, cream cups, penstemons, and those most endearing of California flowers, the nemophilas or "baby-blue-eyes," enliven the wayside. Certain species of particularly sociable habit make solid sheets and ribbons of color, acre on acre, that attract the eye from afar. There are lupines in blue and purple, the mountain lilacs, azure masses, clarkias, godetias and owl's-clover in rose and magenta, gillias pink and red, orange-yellow poppies, and monkey-flowers in buff, cream and mahogany.

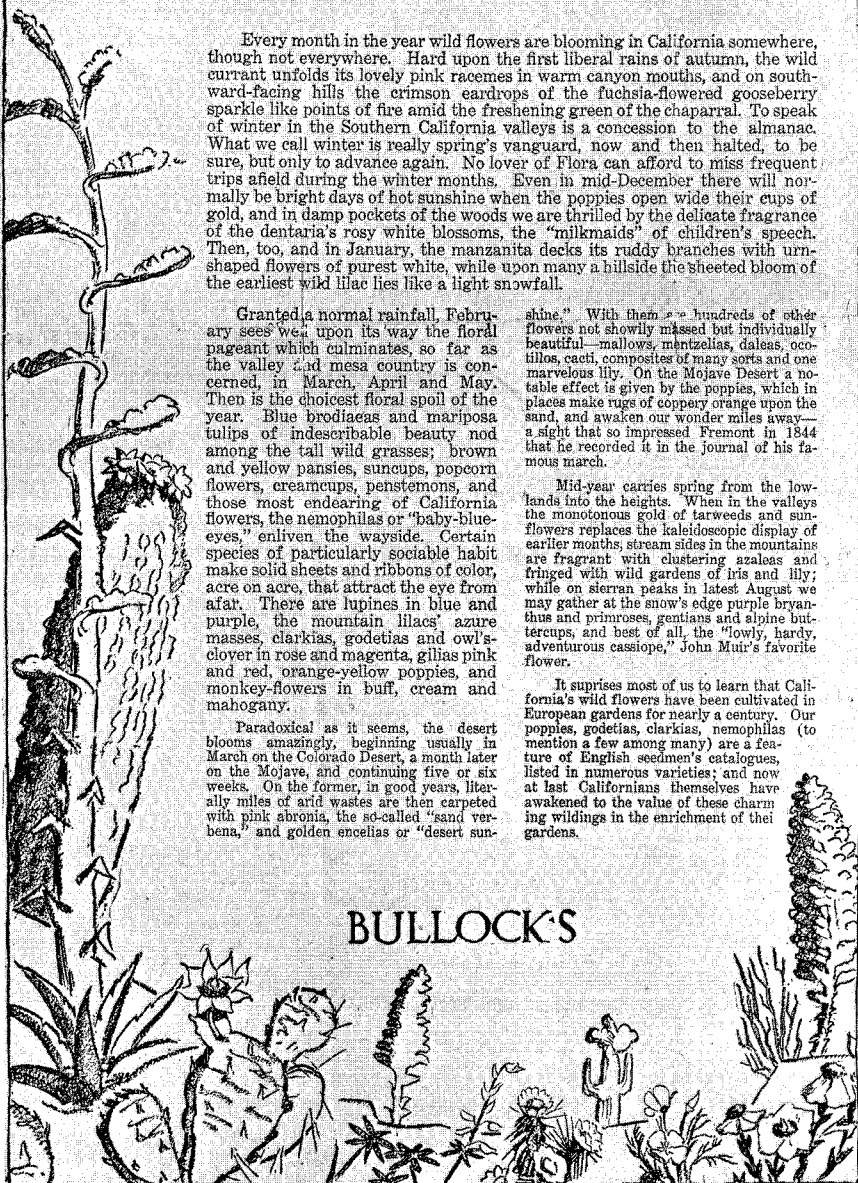
Paradoxical as it seems, the desert blooms amazingly, beginning usually in March on the Colorado Desert, a month later on the Mojave, and continuing five or six weeks. On the former, in good years, literally miles of arid wastes are then carpeted with pink abronia, the so-called "sand ver-bena," and golden encelias or "desert sun-

shine." With them are hundreds of other flowers not showily massed but individually beautiful—mallows, mentzelias, daleas, ocotillos, cacti, composites of many sorts and one marvelous lily. On the Mojave Desert a notable effect is given by the poppies, which in places make rugs of coppery orange upon the sand, and awaken our wonder miles away—a sight that so impressed Fremont in 1844 that he recorded it in the journal of his famous march.

Mid-year carries spring from the lowlands into the heights. When in the valleys the monotonous gold of tarweeds and sunflowers replaces the kaleidoscopic display of earlier months, stream sides in the mountains are fragrant with clustering azaleas and fringed with wild gardens of iris and lily; while on sierran peaks in latest August we may gather at the snow's edge purple bryanthus and primroses, gentians and alpine buttercups, and best of all, the "lowly, hardy, adventurous cassiope," John Muir's favorite flower.

It surprises most of us to learn that California's wild flowers have been cultivated in European gardens for nearly a century. Our poppies, godetias, clarkias, nemophilas (to mention a few among many) are a feature of English seedmen's catalogues, listed in numerous varieties; and now at last Californians themselves have awakened to the value of these charming wildings in the enrichment of their gardens.

BULLOCK'S



married in 1921. Saunders often acknowledged his wife's inspiration. In particular, she persuaded him to write *The Story of Carmelita* (1928) about the Pasadena groves and gardens of Jeanne Carr, the woman Saunders calls "a sort of mother in literature"¹⁷ to John Muir.

One of the most practical of Saunders's books, *The Wild Gardens of Old California* (1927), sought literally to sow the word and plant the seed. Each book had a compartment at the back which contained six packets of California wildflower seeds.

Saunders's other plant books are *With the Flowers and Trees in California* (1914), *The Western Flower Guide* (1917), *Trees and Shrubs of California Gardens* (1926), and *Western Wild Flowers and Their Stories* (1933). Chapter XIV of the 1926 book has an engaging description of the Professor, a recurring character who in this instance resembles Saunders himself.

Mira Saunders said her husband felt "his position as an author was a peculiar one, that he had no standing with scientists because he put the science of botany into writings for the 'man in the street' and that he had no standing with literary men because he introduced scientific terms into literature."¹⁸ His books may seem casual, but they are based on sound research. He gathered his information in the field and from old records and journals as well as from standard scientific works, and he exchanged data with botanists, ethnobotanists, gardeners, and other plant enthusiasts. His prose is clear, direct, and sprightly, directed to those who love plants "for their esthetic graces and human associations rather than for their anatomical makeup and workings."¹⁹

Saunders took special pleasure in making his own garden "a garden of association, the romance and flavor of early California coming into it with its plants which were so often provided . . . from slips, seeds, and roots from places of historic and romantic interest."²⁰ Several plants were mementos of the missions. The tamarisk grew from a slip cut at the abandoned Mission San Antonio de Padua, the nopal from the remnants of a

hedge at Mission San Gabriel, and the white oleander from a bush at Mission San Juan Capistrano. When the mission at Capistrano was restored, new oleanders were started there from the plant in Saunders's garden.

From the time of his first trip to California, Saunders had been interested in the missions. He felt an affinity for the old Franciscan padres and thought them rather Quakerly in their emphasis on peaceful progress. He visited and photographed all the missions, going by foot or by stage as much as possible and avoiding the "impatient automobile."²¹ (He never learned to drive; his wife Mira was the family chauffeur.)

In his books on the missions, Saunders is a perceptive guide. He is a good observer with a lively sense of history and an appreciation of the Franciscan spirit, but he is never overwhelmed by the romance of the past or what he calls "pious enthusiasm."²² He and his friend J. Smeaton Chase collaborated on *The California Padres and Their Missions* (1915), Saunders writing the descriptive and historical portions of each chapter, and Chase the fictional episodes. Saunders also wrote *A Little Book of California Missions*, issued in an attractive edition in 1925 and revised and enlarged in 1939.

In *Capistrano Nights* (1930), which he wrote with Father St. John O'Sullivan, Saunders brings together stories, legends, reminiscences, and folk-sayings. They were all told to Father O'Sullivan by his Spanish-speaking parishioners. Saunders translated the material and gave it a title and format suggested by his wife. (He had first learned Spanish as a schoolboy because of his interest in Don Quixote.) The authors were delighted with their book, but it was not a commercial success. In a year or so they bought up all the unsold copies, disposing of as many of them as possible through a Pasadena bookstore and the little shop at the mission.

Saunders was at work on yet another book at the time of his death on May 1, 1941. One of the last things he did that day was identify some plant specimens for a neighbor.

Of the Golden State's Floral Emblem; How the World Learned about It; and Somewhat of Other Pacific Coast Poppies.

Once upon a time—and it is not so long ago, either, for there are eyewitnesses to the fact living today—the attention of the traveler by sea along the southern California coast in late winter or early spring would be attracted by a remarkable spectacle. For mile upon mile the dimpled foothills of the Coast Range and its seaward stretching mesas would glow as if on fire from the limitless fields of copper-hued poppies; open mouthed to the sun. Tradition has it that in Spanish days sailors on the ships off the coast had their imaginations so stirred by the phenomenon that they nicknamed this country, as they had long before dubbed another bit of America—*La Tierra del Fuego*, the Land of Fire. Others, they say, called this flowery carpet *La Sabanilla de San Pasqual*, that is, the Altar-cloth of St. Pascal, that pious shepherd lad of Old Spain, who, tending his flocks in the open fields remote from church or priest, would kneel among the wild flowers and be rapt of the Spirit into heavenly communion.

How much of fiction and what of truth these old tales embody it is not for me to say; but the fact is beyond dispute that when California was incorporated into the United States, San Pasqual's name was found identified with a rancho whose three square leagues, *poco más ó menos*, as the old deeds ran, spread fair about the Sierra Madre's skirts. Out of it and its poppy fields fifty-odd years ago the land upon which the city of Pasadena now stands was taken; and many another tract as well; so that now our California poppy would be little more than a tale that was told over much of that old rancho's area, were it not for the gardens that harbor the flower's domesticated descendants.

from *Western Wild Flowers and Their Stories* (1933)

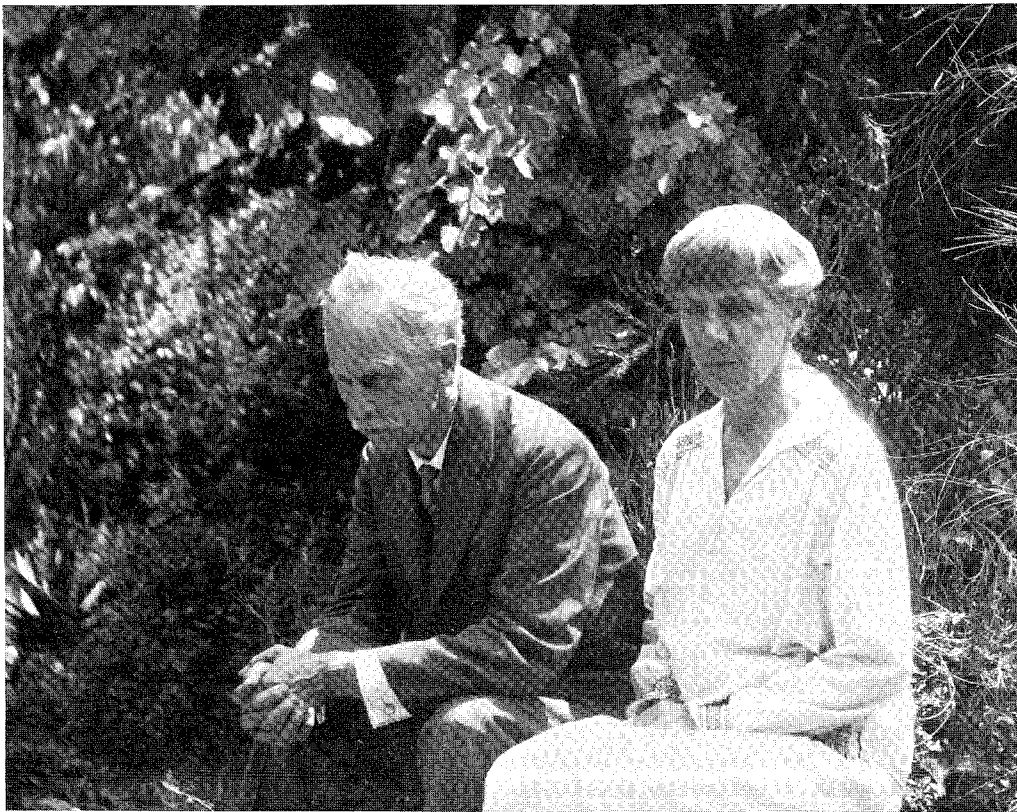
Mira Saunders lived until 1968. A woman of spirit and deep convictions, she worked actively for women's rights, for Indian rights, and for peace. During the war, Doubleday asked permission to melt the plates of *Western Wild Flowers and Their Stories* for scrap. She wrote back, "As my husband believed that war was an anachronism, and that religion, knowledge of other instruments, and intelligence were available to prevent it, for me to give this permission you ask is exceedingly difficult."²³ Eventually she bought the plates of all her husband's books except *Trees and Shrubs of California Gardens*. She felt his work deserved to be kept in print and always hoped it could be republished.

For many years Mira Saunders wrote about plants for the *Pasadena Star-News*, illustrating her articles with her own photographs. At the age of ninety she published an article in *The Herbarist* on the Rose of Castile, one of the flowers she and her husband loved best.

Mira Saunders gave collections to three West Coast institutions to help preserve her husband's memory. His magnificent collection of Indian baskets, pottery, and other artifacts is in the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles. His valuable botanic library forms the nucleus of the reference library at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. His letters and personal copies of his books are at the Huntington Library, San Marino, along with Mira Saunders's articles and letters.

It is pleasant to know that a variety of pelargonium was named for Mira Saunders. Her husband's name is joined with John C. Frémont's in *Dalea Fremontii* var. *Saundersii*, an indigo bush Saunders discovered in the Mojave Desert in 1903. As he wrote when discussing the Fremontia, "To have one's name linked to a plant in Nature's wild garden is to be inducted into a choice hierarchy—and to be insured a fame of rare sweetness and of rare endurance, too."²⁴

All photographs are courtesy of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.



Saunders with his second wife, Mira Culin, author of many articles on the flowers and trees of Pasadena.

Notes

1. Edward Hicks Parry in *The Friend*, Sixth Month 26, 1941.
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3. Quoted by Mira C. Saunders in "Inns and Outs," MS.
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6. C. F. Saunders, MS notebook, 1898.
7. Carl Eytel to Saunders, [1925?].
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10. Ventura Roseta to Saunders, March 28, 1911.
11. C. F. Saunders, *Under the Sky in California*, 175.
12. Eytel to Saunders, May 24, 1913.
13. C. F. Saunders, *Under the Sky in California* (New York, 1926), preface to the fourth printing.
14. C. F. Saunders, *Finding the Worth While in California* (New York, 1916), p. 213.
15. C. F. Saunders, *The Southern Sierras of California* (Boston and New York, 1923), p. 181.
16. *Ibid.*, 130, note.
17. C. F. Saunders, MS notes for *The Story of Carmelita*.
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20. Mira Saunders in *Pasadena Star-News*, March 30, 1952.
21. C. F. Saunders and J. Smeaton Chase, *California Padres and Their Stories* (Boston and New York, 1915), p. 328.
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Rincon Hill was San Francisco's most genteel



neighborhood

When Robert Louis Stevenson visited San Francisco in 1879-1880, he found Rincon Hill to be “one of the most San Francisco-y parts” of the city.¹ Twenty-nine-year-old Stevenson was unknown, low on money, and had plenty of time to explore San Francisco. In fair weather, he often left his Bush Street boarding house early in the morning, crossed Market Street, and walked up Rincon Hill to enjoy the views from its 150-foot summit and the countrified feeling it offered in the midst of the city.

Another thing which drew Stevenson to Rincon Hill was its slowly decaying mansions and their old-fashioned gentility which appealed so strongly to the romantic young writer and his Victorian love of pathos. Back in the 1850s and 1860s, Rincon Hill, which extended from Folsom to Bryant streets and from Spear to Third streets, had been San Francisco’s most stylish neighborhood.

Charles Lockwood is the author of *Suddenly San Francisco: The Early Years of an Instant City* (1978) and three books on New York City.

Couples promenade and gentlemen show off their steeds on genteel Rincon Hill (at Second Street) c.1857. Modest but handsome frame cottages, some carried around Cape Horn in sections, were beginning to fill in the sunny neighborhood’s empty lots.

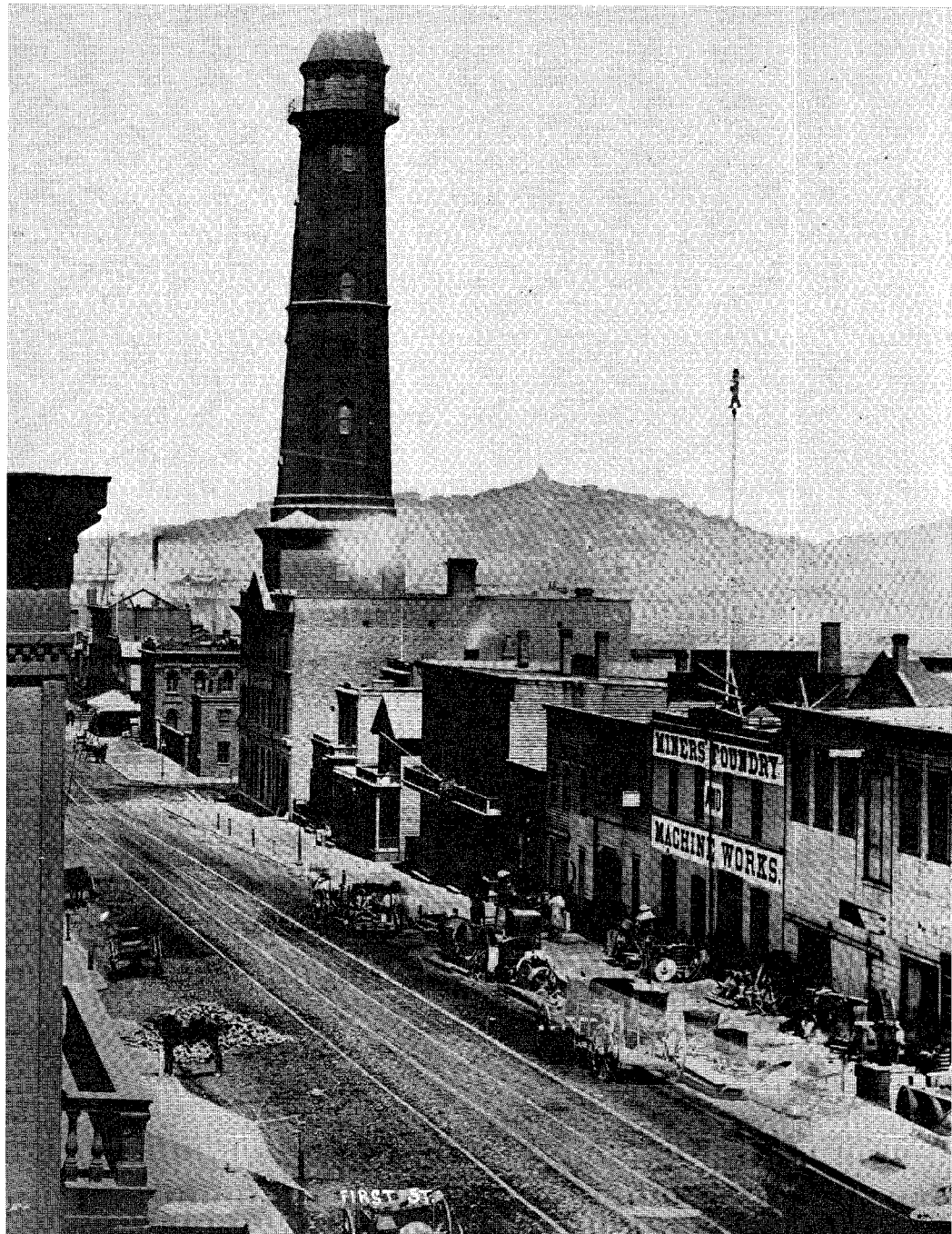
By the mid 1860s, industry was entering the Rincon Hill reserve. First Street was increasingly home to industrial buildings including the Miners Foundry and Machine Works and the Selby Shot Tower.

Why had well-to-do San Franciscans chosen a South of Market Street location for their homes? San Francisco was a far different city in the early 1850s when these families started settling on Rincon Hill than it was twenty years later. Respectable San Franciscans wanted to avoid all contact with the rowdy saloons, gambling dens, and brothels clustered around Portsmouth Square and the waterfront. Rincon Hill was a suburban location, half a mile from all these unpleasant things, and, what's more, it offered good, virtually fog-free weather and fine views.

In 1850 Rincon Hill was open land, except for a few small trees, overgrown underbrush, and some squatters' shacks and tents. Yet only three years later the houses on Rincon Hill were "numerous" and "elegant," according to the *Annals of San Francisco*.² The houses which rose on Rincon Hill in the 1850s and 1860s represented the architectural styles then fashionable in America—the Greek Revival, the Gothic Revival, and the Italianate. W. L. Palmer built an octagonal house at 329 Second Street near Harrison Street. Over on South Park, George Gordon was building handsome stone-fronted row houses around a pretty oval park.

The grandest houses on Rincon Hill, however, stood along Folsom Street, between Second and Third streets. In 1854 John Parrott built an Italianate style mansion in brown-

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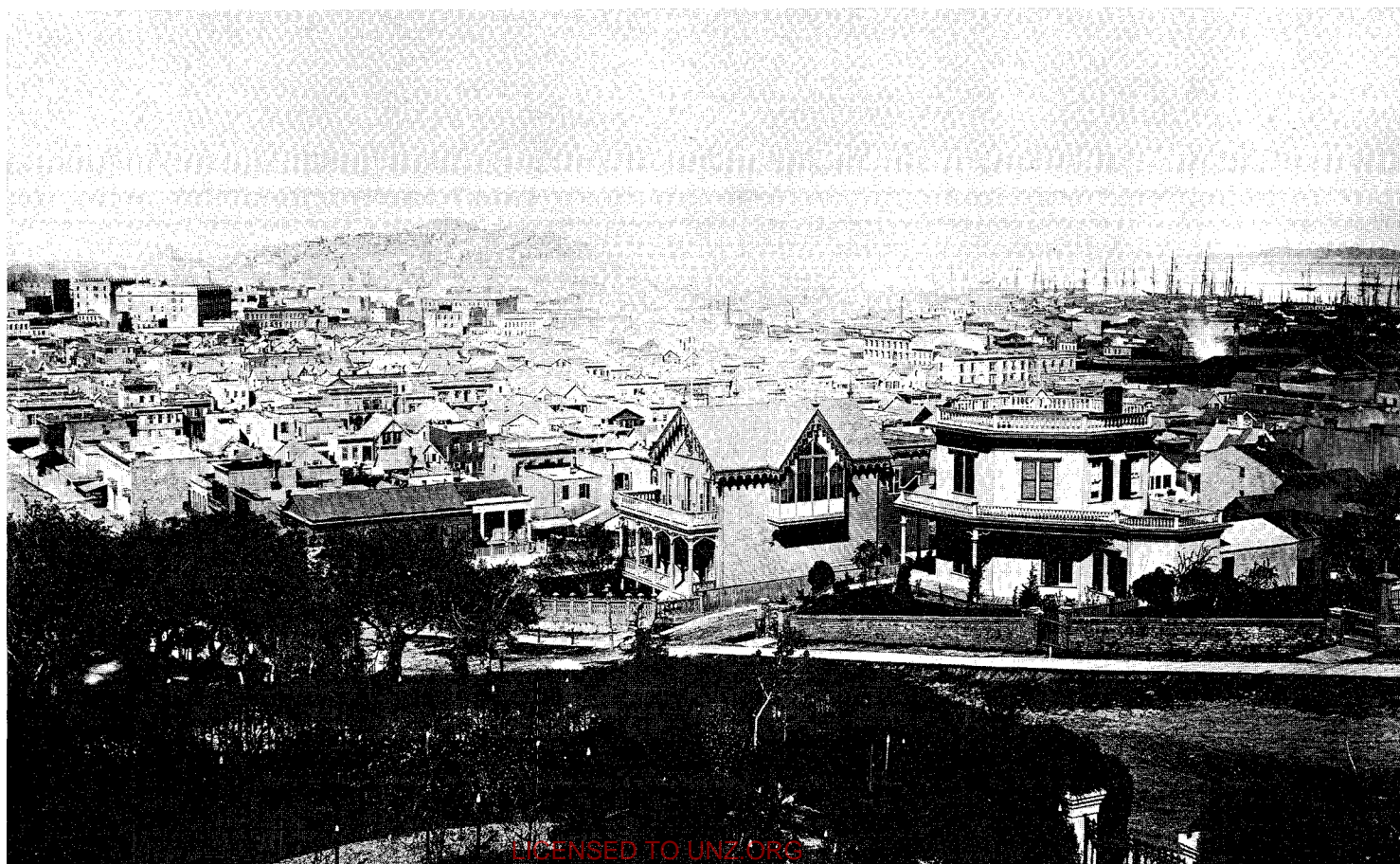


Rincon Hill



From the "City and County Map of San Francisco (1863)"

The octagon house of W. L. Palmer and a neighboring Gothic Revival home built on the slope of Rincon Hill at Harrison Street look over the growing city in 1866.



The grand Milton S. Latham residence at 630 Folsom Street between Second and Third was described by the Morning Call as "a most unlucky piece of property." Purchased from Joseph "Ophir" Woodworth in 1865, the house passed out of Latham's hands—as it had Woodworth's—when he lost his fortune. By the 1890s, genteel people did not want to live on Folsom Street, and the home became a boardinghouse.



stone at 620 Folsom Street. Former United States Senator and California Governor Milton S. Latham lived next door at No. 630 in an even more imposing home.

Rincon Hill's decline began around 1870. Industry was taking over the South of Market area, and middle-class families were leaving their pleasant houses and cottages for other parts of town. By the 1870s, the South of Market area had turned into a district of factories, working class cottages and boarding houses, and raucous sailors' bars and hotels.

Another development that permanently harmed fashionable Rincon Hill was the digging of the Second Street "cut" in 1869. Before that, Second Street climbed over and down Rincon Hill at one of its highest points. The steepness of the grade was satisfactory for a little-traveled street in a stylish neighborhood, but it hindered wagon traffic between the South of Market factories and the docks near China Basin. Accordingly, in 1869 the city dug a seventy-five-foot-deep "cut" through Rincon Hill which brought Second Street down to level grade but left an ugly chasm and houses perched perilously close to the edge.³

Although Rincon Hill's days as a fashionable address were clearly numbered, rich and prominent families were reluctant to leave the area. Around 1880 "the quarter was still pathetically respectable," wrote



Next door to the Latham house stood the Parrott mansion, completed in 1854. One of the grandest pre-Nob Hill homes in San Francisco, it maintained its dignity as the neighborhood declined. On Parrott's death, the Wieland brewery family, apparently oblivious to the increasingly noisy world beyond its trimmed lawns, purchased the mansion. It burned in the 1906 fire.

Parrott and Latham left their permanent mark on San Francisco, however. New Montgomery Street is only two blocks long because they refused to sell their properties to make way for extension of the street beyond Howard Street.

Charles Warren Stoddard, “and for three quarters [blocks] at least its handsome residences stared destiny in the face and stood in the midst of flower-bordered lawns, unmindful of decay.”⁴ An even better qualified judge of fashion, the *Elite Directory*, thought in 1879 that Rincon Hill was still one of the “most genteel” neighborhoods in the city. “Fragments of polite society still linger there,” it reported, and the directory’s Calling and Address List carried over eighty names with Rincon Hill addresses.⁵

A few remnants of Rincon Hill’s grand past survived through the turn of the century. The Parrott mansion looked much as it always had, but the Latham residence next door had become a boarding house. Most of the old mansions were still standing around South Park. Some were shuttered and silent, probably empty, while others had lost all former pretension and carried signs offering rooms for rent.

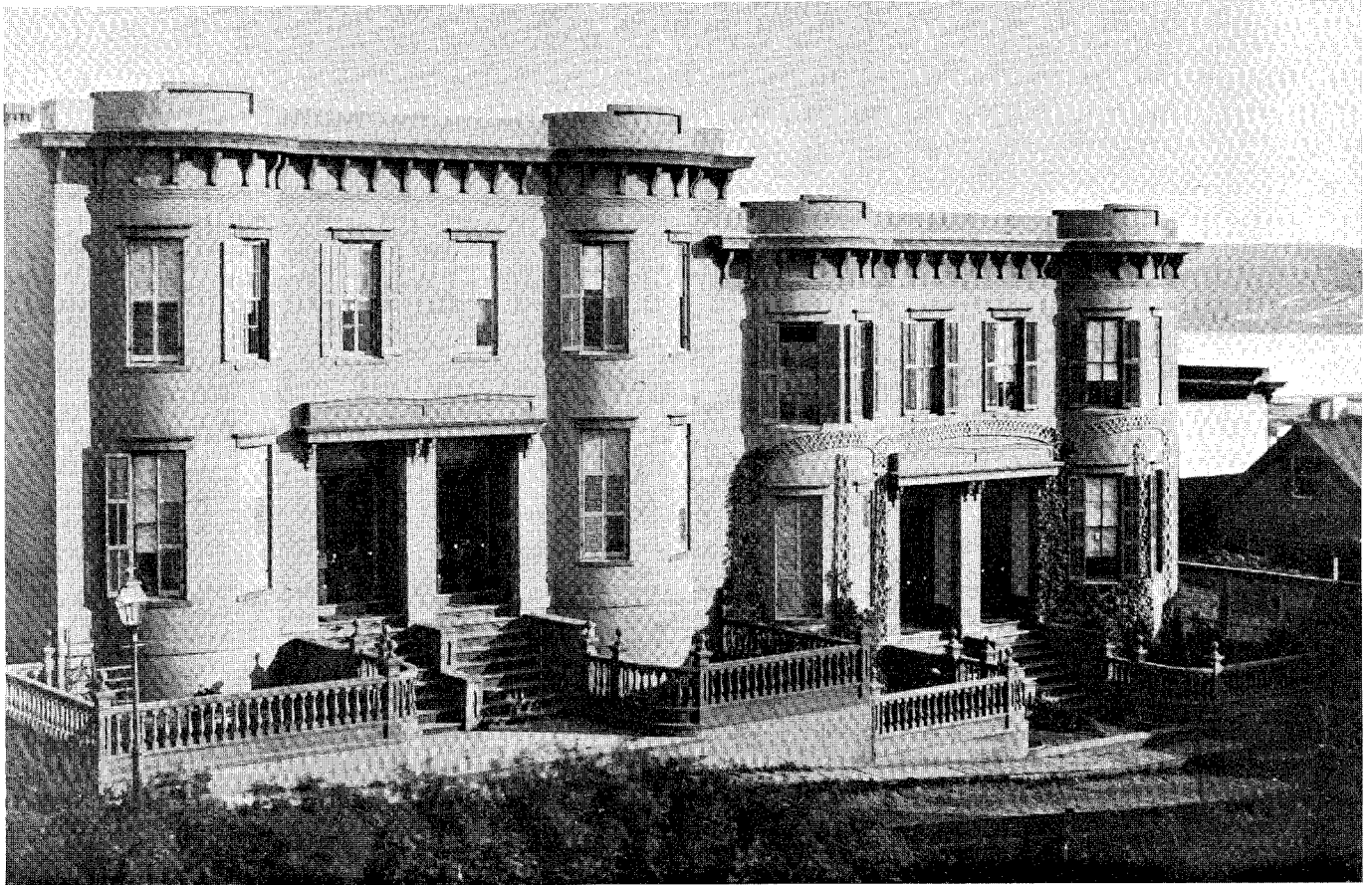
All this fading glory vanished in the April, 1906, earthquake and fire. In October of that year, the city-commissioned Marsden Manson Report recommended that Rincon Hill be cut down to provide more flat land for warehouses and factories close to the waterfront. Nothing came of this proposal, though, which surfaced again in 1913 and 1927.⁶

The uncertainty over Rincon Hill’s future discouraged real estate investors from erecting warehouses

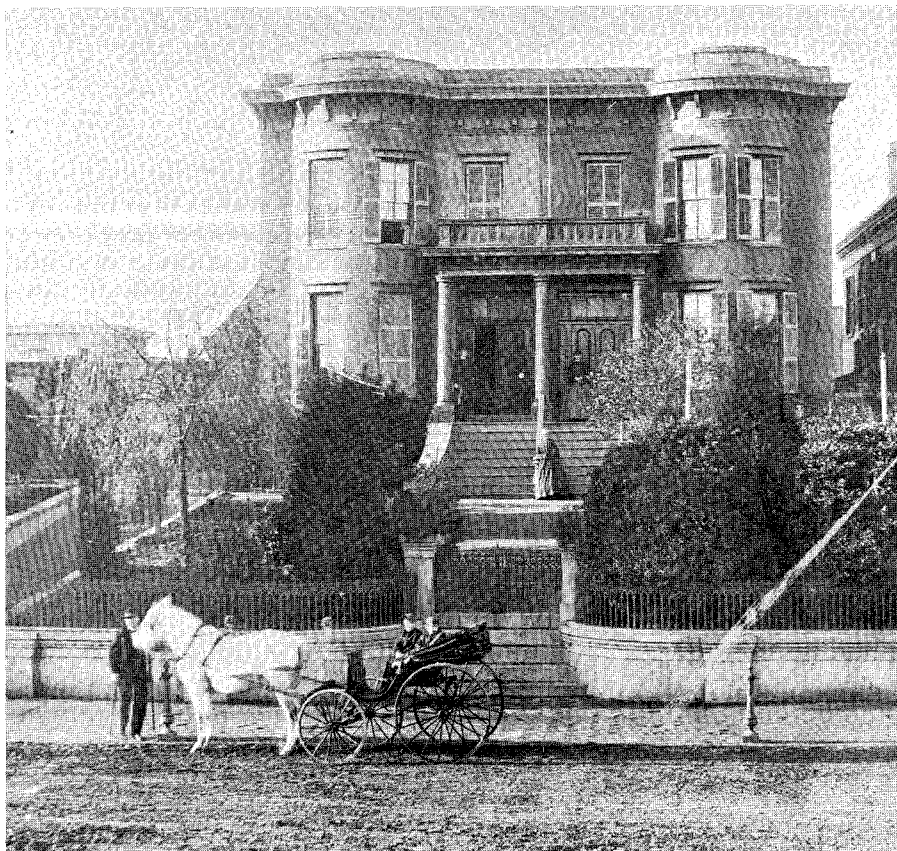
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When Peter Donahue built his mansion on the northeast corner of Bryant and Second Street in the 1860s, he was president of the nearby Union Iron Works. His three-story, forty-room mansion and grounds, which included a carriage house and servants' quarters, were torn down c.1900. The landmark Schmidt Lithograph building rose on the site.



Vernon Place (today Dow Street), a half-block street bounded by Harrison, Folsom, Second, and Hawthorne, boasted double houses with bow fronts and shutters like their Boston counterparts in the 1860s.

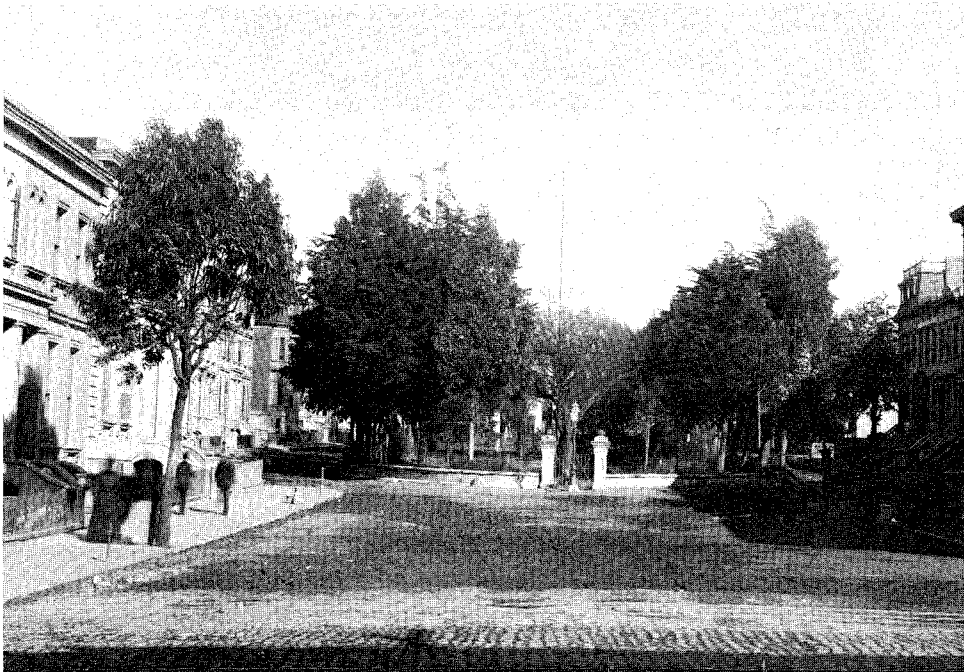
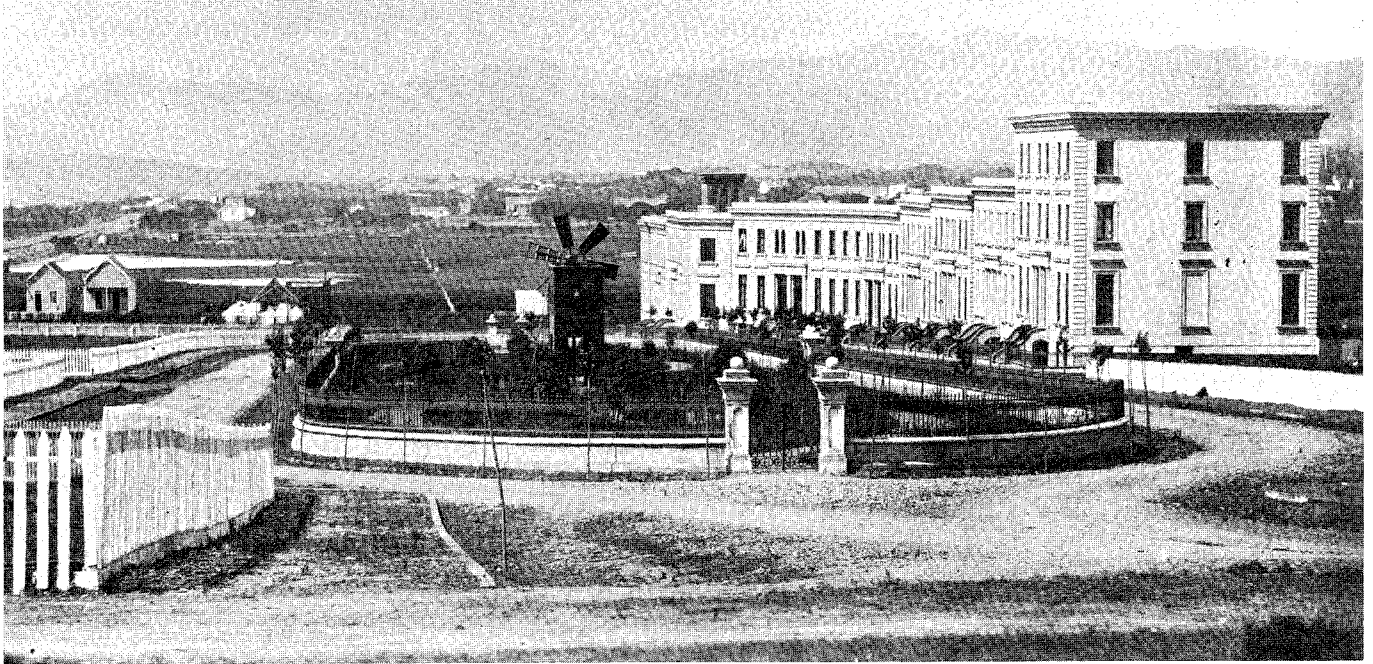


Bishop William I. Kip's house on Second Street (the bishop stands on the porch) reflects the same eastern architecture. Kip's house literally slid into the Second Street "cut."



Some wealthy families went to great lengths to stay in the Rincon Hill neighborhood. John O. Eldridge moved his family and rambling two-story home from Second Street, where it was perilously close to the "cut," to Folsom.

Rincon Hill



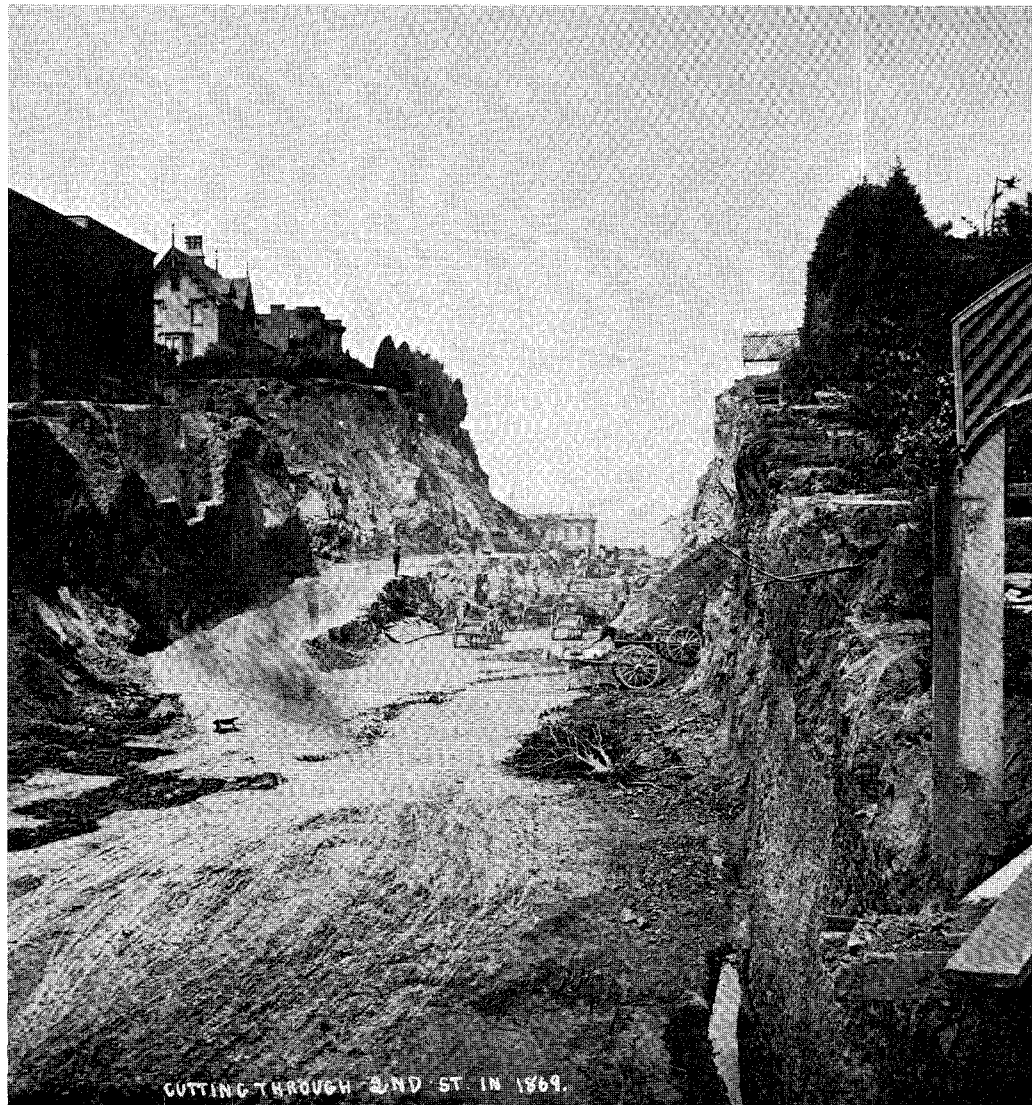
Stylish South Park and its dignified row houses around a private, oval-shape garden park reminded San Franciscans of their homes back east. The Englishman George Gordon purchased the six 100-vara lots bounded by Bryant, Brannan, Second, and Third in 1852, built the first row houses, and advertised the properties thusly: "For quiet, economical family residences, free from risks or annoyances of contiguous shops or stores, South Park furnishes the most elegant sites in the City."

and industrial buildings in the area. When Charles Caldwell Dobie visited Rincon Hill in the early 1930s, he reported that its slopes were “dotted with home-made shacks compounded of refuse lumber, packing-boxes, and sheet iron.” Dobie, who often criticized the city’s ethnic groups and unusual lifestyles, surprisingly considered “these tiny shelters” to be “very trim and ship-shape. . . . Geraniums run blushing up to the low window-sills, and clamshells outline the occasional attempt at gardening.” He went on: “Women are rarely in evidence, which confirms the suspicion that these cabin-like quarters are the dwelling place of dock workers or even seafaring males who like a snug harbor between voyages.”⁷

All these shacks and most of Rincon Hill itself disappeared during the construction of the San Francisco Bay Bridge in the 1930s. All that remains of Rincon Hill today is a truncated clump of land with several warehouses and run-down hotels and flats.

Nearby South Park’s green ellipse survives today, even though the 1906 fire destroyed the surrounding buildings. South Park was rebuilt with warehouses and machine shops, modest flats, and several hotels for merchant mariners and longshoremen. Reporter Robert O’Brien visited South Park in the 1940s and described the buildings as “all gray,

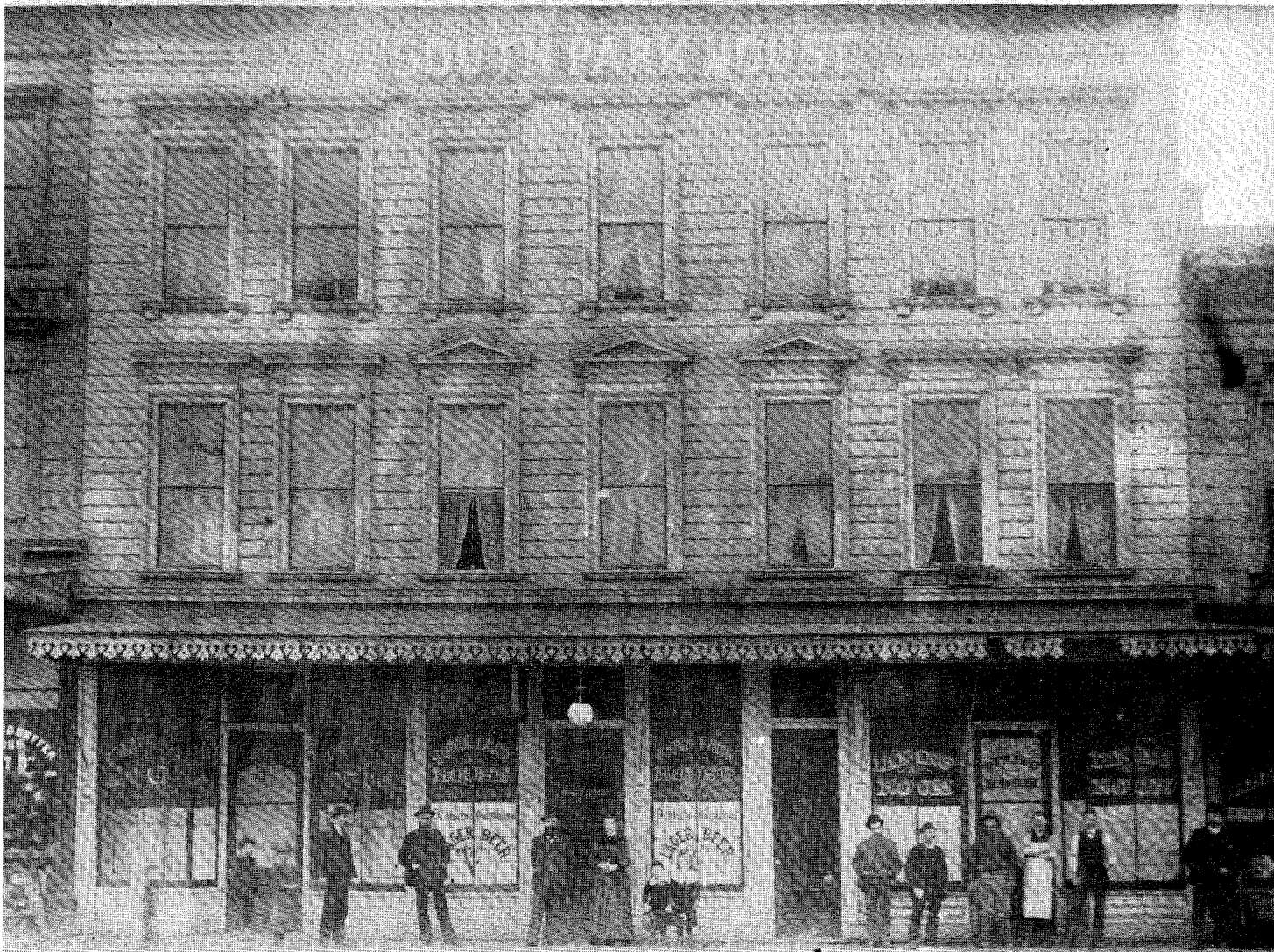
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The digging of the Second Street “cut” in 1869 signaled the beginning of Rincon Hill’s decline as the most desirable neighborhood in San Francisco. The “cut” was unsightly; it split Rincon Hill in half; and worse yet, it endangered houses near its edge.

Rincon Hill

South Park remained a stylish address until late in the nineteenth century, but like Rincon Hill, it was an oasis in the middle of the industrial and working class South of Market neighborhood. The modest South Park House stood on Third Street, just around the corner from one entrance to South Park itself.



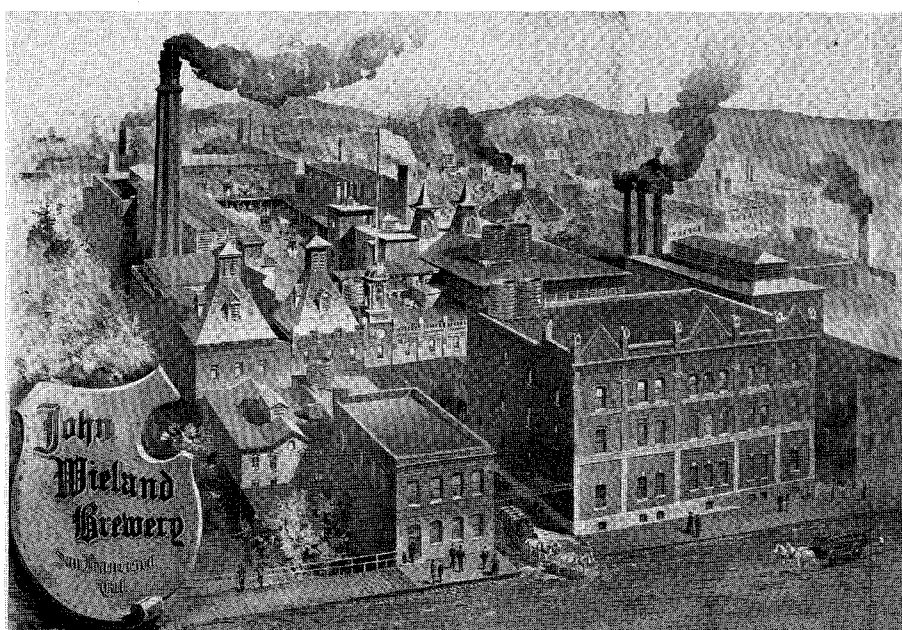
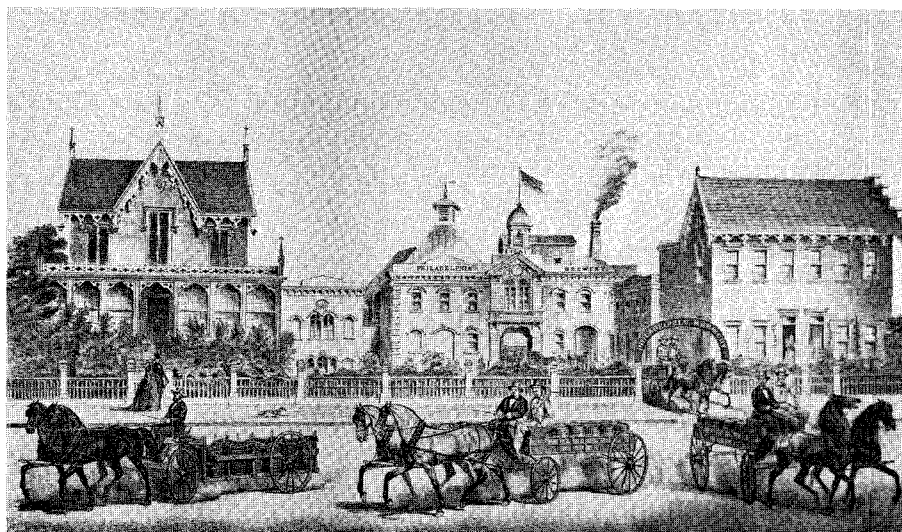
and the effect even in the warm sunshine, was that of a slattern with a hangover, who wished you would go away and leave her alone.”⁸

South Park hasn’t changed much since. Men and women, young and old, white and black, pass the time in the park, enjoying the outdoors and drinking from bottles wrapped in brown paper bags. The buildings are as sad looking and decayed as any in San Francisco.

All the illustrations are from the CHS Library.

Notes

1. Sydney Colvin, ed., *Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson to his Family and Friends* (New York, 1899), II:21.
2. Frank Soule, John H. Gihon, and James Nesbit, *The Annals of San Francisco* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1855), p. 489.
3. Albert Shumate, *A Visit to Rincon Hill and South Park* (San Francisco: Yerba Buena Chapter/E. Clampus Vitus, 1963), pp. 13-14.
4. Albert Shumate, “Rincon or Telegraph Hill: Robert Louis Stevenson’s Introduction to the South Seas,” *California Historical Quarterly*, 46 (Sept., 1967) 227.
5. *Elite Directory for San Francisco and Oakland for 1879* (San Francisco: Argonaut Publishing Company, 1879), p. 20.
6. Shumate, *A Visit*, 17-18.
7. Charles Caldwell Dobie, *San Francisco: A Pageant* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), pp. 234-35.
8. Robert O’Brien, *This Is San Francisco* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), p. 295.



The influx of industry into the South of Market area proved Rincon Hill’s final undoing. As early as 1852, John Wieland announced plans to build a brewery at the northwest corner of Folsom and Second streets. He refused offers to buy him out at substantial profit, and by the late 1850s his brewery had settled into one of the prettiest parts of Rincon Hill. It was a nuisance to local residents, but even the wealthiest families endured such inconveniences in nineteenth-century American cities because zoning laws were nonexistent. Wieland’s brewery started out with just one building, but by the turn of the century, multiple buildings and belching smokestacks identified its progress and prosperity.

Before the "cut," Second Street had been a stylish promenade and shopping street for residents of Rincon Hill and South Park; after, it became a busy industrial and commercial artery. In this view taken soon after the 1906 fire, the iron bridge carrying Harrison Street traffic over the cut is visible in the background. The hastily constructed shacks on the crest of Rincon Hill remained amid the rubble until the construction of the Bay Bridge in the 1930s.



BLACKS VS. NAVY BLUE

World War II was a crucible in which a new era of race relations was forged in the United States. For the first time more than a million black men and women served in the armed forces, about half of them overseas. The war also accelerated the migration of blacks to northern and western cities and gave them more economic and political clout than ever before. With Adolf Hitler demonstrating the evils of racism, respectable people and publications no longer could openly espouse white supremacist doctrines. Segregation nevertheless persisted in the United States, and nowhere more obviously than in the military itself. World War II was essentially conducted as a Jim Crow operation by the army, navy and marines, with nearly all black personnel assigned to segregated units commanded by white officers.

The inconsistency of fighting Nazism with racially segregated military units was not lost on black Americans. Accordingly, the armed forces became a special target of protest and organizational activity (helping pave the way for the civil rights activism of the post-war

era). A number of specific incidents focused attention on wartime military segregation, among them the important Mare Island mutiny court martial trial of September and October, 1944. The refusal by fifty black sailors to load ammunition ships at the Mare Island Naval Depot in northern San Francisco Bay produced the navy's first mutiny court martial of the war and the longest and largest mutiny trial in navy history. It also resulted in protests and pressures that helped bring about a remarkable transformation in the navy's racial policies.¹

The so-called mutiny at Mare Island had its origins in pre-war navy personnel policies. In 1941 blacks were still excluded from all naval assignments except the messman's service. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox argued that to allow black sailors to do other tasks would "provoke discord and demoralization." Admiral Chester

Charles Wollenberg is Reviews Editor of the magazine and author of *All Deliberate Speed: Segregation and Exclusion in California Schools, 1855-1975*.

The Mare Island Mutiny Court Martial

Bits of wreckage (marked by arrows) protrude from the water at Port Chicago, all that remained of the two ammunition ships which exploded. In the foreground are the shattered remnants of the dock with its railroad equipment and installations.



*The surviving stevedores were
reassembled at Mare Island and . . .
ordered to load ammunition ships.
Some 328 men refused.*

W. Nimitz explained that "the policy of now enlisting men of the Colored race for any branch of naval service except the messman's branch was adopted to meet the best interests of general ship efficiency."

For a time after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the navy tried to maintain its policy of using blacks exclusively as "chambermaids for the braid." When Dorie Miller, a black messman, manned a machine gun and shot down at least four Japanese planes during the Pearl Harbor attack, navy brass initially played down the incident, apparently to prevent attention to the fact that black men could perform well in combat. But under pressure from civil rights groups and President Franklin Roosevelt, Navy Secretary Knox finally announced on April 7, 1942, that black enlistees henceforth would be accepted for "general service." The "messman only" era was at an end.²

The navy's new policy was not one of integration, however. A segregated facility for black recruits was established at Great Lakes Naval Training Center in Illinois, with smaller segregated installations set up at Memphis and Hampton Institute in Virginia. Except for messmen, blacks were assigned to shore duty only, primarily as stevedores and seabees in segregated units commanded by whites. In 1943 the navy began accepting black draftees and a very few black officer candidates. In 1944 the secretary of the navy established a unit of black Waves, members of the women's reserve, and assigned black crews to two auxiliary vessels. Also in 1944 the navy published a "Guide to the Command of Negro Personnel" which proclaimed that "the navy

accepts no theories of racial differences in inborn ability" and cautioned officers against referring to blacks as "niggers," "nigras," "boy," "coon," "darkey," or "jig."³ But the official policy of segregation continued.

One of the first naval installations to receive "general service" black enlistees was the Port Chicago Naval Magazine on San Francisco Bay, a facility about thirty-five miles northeast of San Francisco and fifteen miles east of Mare Island. Following Secretary Knox's "general service" order of 1942, segregated units of black sailors were assigned to load ammunition ships at Port Chicago. On the evening of July 17, 1944, about half of the Port Chicago stevedores were loading the *Quinalt Victory* and *E. A. Bryan* when a massive explosion rocked the entire area. The blast looked like a "flaming doughnut," a "blinding flash that literally filled the sky." After the fire subsided, the place where the men had been working was described as "a scorched earth scene," with both ships and the pier at which they were docked totally destroyed. Most buildings on the naval base and in the town of Port Chicago had been damaged, and windows were shattered in nearby Martinez. Approximately 320 men died in the blast, more than 200 of whom were black sailors who had been loading the ammunition.⁴

In the days following the event, a navy spokesman expressed doubt that the exact cause of the explosion would ever be known, and he commended the surviving black personnel at Port Chicago for their "coolness and bravery." Off-duty and in their barracks at the time of the blast, the men had immediately begun fighting fires and searching for survivors. They were later joined by black sailors from Mare Island, and eventually four of the men who had battled the flames raging among the boxcars loaded with ammunition received decorations. Admiral C. H. Wright, commandant of the Twelfth Naval District, particularly commended the black sailors who "gave their lives in the service of their country. . . . Their sacrifice could not have been greater had it occurred on a battleship or a beachhead."⁵

Exclusive Aerial Photos of the Disaster

San Francisco Chronicle EXTRA

THE CITY'S ONLY HOME-OWNED NEWSPAPER

FOUNDED 1865—VOL. CLIX, NO. 4

CCCC

SAN FRANCISCO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1944

DAILY 5 CENTS, SUNDAY 15 CENTS

BLAST DEATH TOLL NOW 377; 1000 INJURED!

Terrific Explosion In the Bay Region

Damage at Port Chicago
Is Well Over Five Million;
No Cause Has Been Found

**The Army Brings Up Armored Car
And Troops to Protect Property;
Only a Few Bodies Are Recovered**

Death toll resulting from the explosion Monday night at Port Chicago, on San Francisco Bay of tons of war munitions in the holds of two ships mounted to the 377 mark yesterday as semi-official estimates were compiled.

Damage was estimated to be more than \$5,000,000, excluding the cost of the munitions lost. The ships were valued at about \$4,300,000.

Destruction of the huge Army arsenal at Benicia, only seven miles from the scene of the Port Chicago catastrophe was averted by miraculous chance. The blast, according to military officials, caused damage there estimated at \$150,000 to the arsenal facilities and injured six persons.

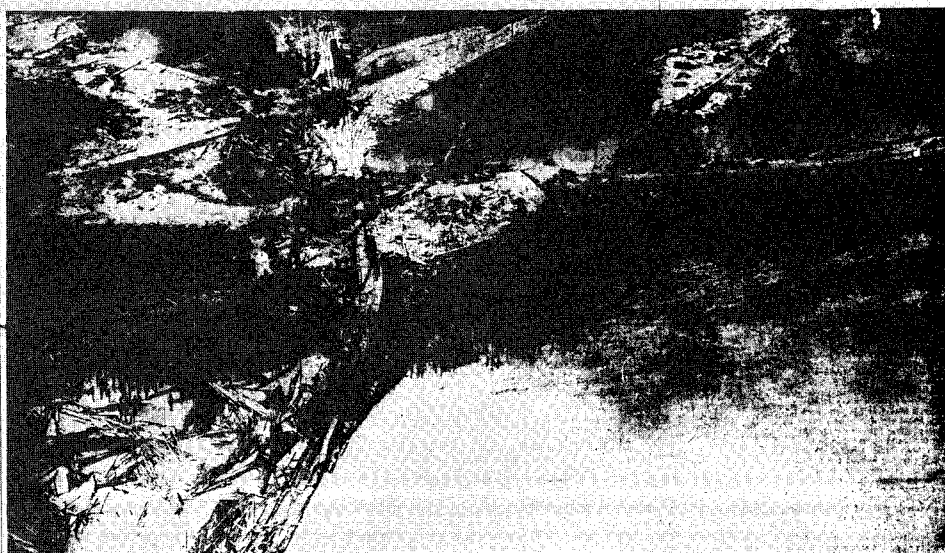
Reports from official sources gave this death roster:

KNOWN DEAD

258 Killed Navy personnel,
5 Navy officers,
28 United States Maritime Commission seamen,
5 Coast Guardsmen,
1 Civilian railroad worker.

197 TOTAL

To this total must be added, Navy spokesmen said, members of two armed guard crews of the two multi-mine ships. Aircraft of a guard crew is restricted military information. Unofficial sources indicated



Here is tangible evidence of the most disastrous explosion in the history of the

Bay Area. This exclusive Chronicle aerial photo shows the tangled pilings of the

twisted dock at the Navy's Port Chicago ammunition depot. Although taken only

a few hours after the terrific blast, the picture indicates some restoration work.

On August 9 and 10, some three weeks after the tragedy, the surviving stevedores were reassembled at Mare Island and, for the first time since the explosion, ordered to load ammunition ships. Some 328 men refused to do so, explaining that they feared another blast. After the initial refusal to work, Captain N. H. Goss, commander of the Mare Island depot, instructed his 3 division officers to give individual work orders to each man, and while this apparently was not done in all cases, 70 sailors did subsequently agree to load ammunition. On August 11 Admiral Wright addressed the remaining 258 men. He permitted about 25 men to state their

grievances and reported that they did so "freely and respectfully." After Wright's speech, all but 44 of the sailors agreed to work, although 6 more men later refused. The 50 men abstaining were then separated from their units and held in detention.⁶

On August 13 Captain Goss prepared a written memorandum to summarize the oral report he already had given Admiral Wright. The memo not only covered the facts of the incident, but also included Goss's views on the roots of the problem. Goss stated that ever since blacks had been assigned to Port Chicago and Mare Island, there had been "agitators, ringleaders among

these men." He also thought that the sailors had been subjected to "outside propaganda and subversive influence." Goss apparently considered himself an expert on what he called the "normal characteristics of Negroes," and he believed that the Port Chicago men were unusual because they had "a persistent disposition to question orders, to argue, and in effect to attempt to bargain." Another "new characteristic" which Goss had "never observed before among Negroes" was sensitivity about discrimination. This he could not understand, given "the extreme care and patience which has been exercised both at Mare Island and Port Chicago to avoid discrimination." Goss concluded that "concerted action and persistent refusal to obey orders" among the men "indicated a mutinous attitude." He recommended that the 30 hold-outs be charged with mutiny before a general court martial. The 208 who agreed to work after Admiral Wright's speech should be charged with a lesser offense before a summary court martial. The 70 who chose to return to work on August 10 should be free from disciplinary action.⁷

Admiral Wright had already forwarded Goss's oral recommendations to Washington by August 13. Wright himself was not so free with his personal opinions as Goss, but he did note in his report to Washington that he believed that "a considerable portion of the men involved are of a low order of mentality. . . ." Wright urged that ammunition handling was a "logical use" of black personnel but said that "pains must be taken" to avoid the appearance of discrimination. The admiral suggested a rotation system in which the black men would occasionally be given other duties and the assignment of some white units to the task of loading ammunition.⁸

Wright's report was addressed to the new secretary of the navy, James V. Forrestal, who had replaced Frank Knox after the latter's death in the spring of 1944. Forrestal approved Wright's recommendations and on August 28 wrote to President Roosevelt informing him

of the situation. The initial draft of the letter to the president simply covered the facts of the case and the disciplinary action planned. But the final draft signed on August 28 included the proposal to rotate black sailors in other jobs and to assign white units to handle ammunition. Forrestal told the president that these measures would "avoid any semblance of discrimination against Negroes."⁹

The mutiny trial of the black sailors began on September 14 at Treasure Island Naval Base in San Francisco Bay. Retired Admiral Hugo S. Osterhaus presided as president of the seven-man trial board. Chief prosecutor and trial judge advocate was Lt. Commander James F. Coakley. Before the war, Coakley had been an assistant district attorney in Alameda County in an office once headed by Earl Warren. (After the war Coakley was elected district attorney, and he gained prominence in the prosecution of Berkeley demonstrators in the 1960s.) The five-man defense team at Treasure Island was led by Lt. Gerald E. Veltmann.

The defense lost its most important legal battle before the trial began. Veltmann had submitted a pre-trial brief calling for dismissal of the mutiny charge in which he quoted from *Winthrop's Military Law and Precedents*. *Winthrop's* defined mutiny as "unlawful opposition or resistance to, or defiance of superior military authority with a deliberate attempt to usurp, subvert or override the same." The brief argued that this definition clearly required that men charged with mutiny must intend to seize or overthrow command. At worst, he argued, the Mare Island sailors had simply disobeyed an order with no intent to "usurp, subvert or override" authority.¹⁰

The prosecution countered with its own quotation from *Winthrop's*: "Collective insubordination or simultaneous disobedience of a lawful order by two or more

Where Death and Destruction Struck

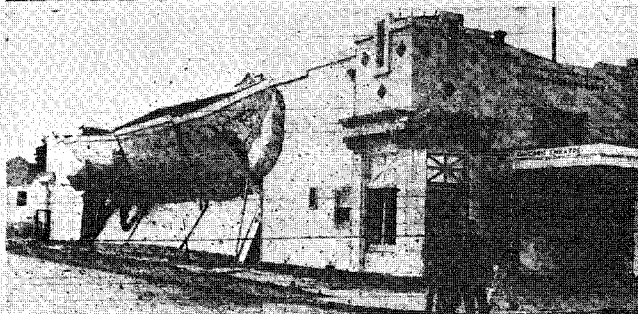
San Francisco Examiner
July 19, 1944
G.C.C. 8



WRECKAGE—This is a general view of the enormous damage done to the dock area at Port Chicago by the explosion of the two ammunition ships. Literally blown to matchwood, the debris in the

background is what was left of railroad equipment and installations. Concussion reduced the two automobiles in the foreground to little more than candidates for the junk yard.

—United States Navy Photo



BUCKLED—This is the exterior of the Port Chicago motion picture theater, one well buckled in. The entire audience of 185 escaped with only minor injuries. Joe Meyer, manager of the theater, who was

in the projection booth, was knocked unconscious, but recovered quickly enough to call down to the theater and tell everyone to leave quietly.

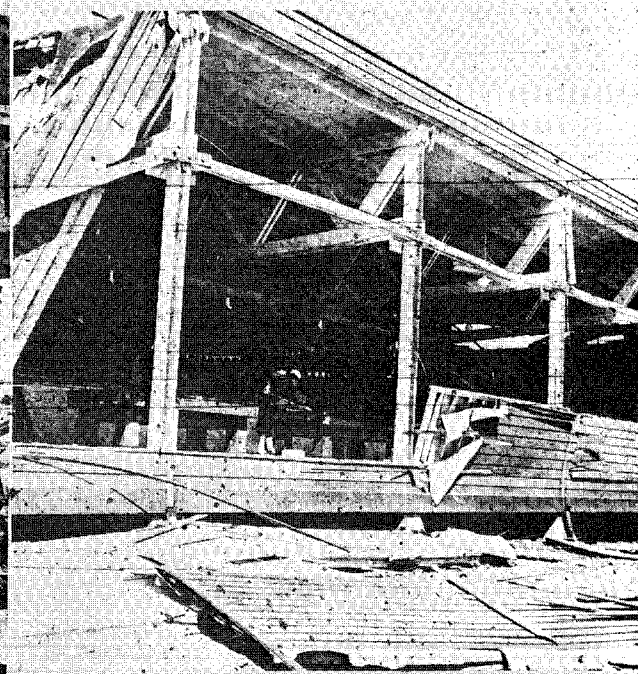
—Photo by San Francisco Examiner



RUBBLE—A close-up scene on the Port Chicago waterfront which was repeated scores of times. Observers pointed out that an aerial attack by blockbuster bombs could not have created more havoc and

destruction. One witness who narrowly escaped injury said: "I thought the Japs had come over for sure to answer to our recent B-29 bombings of their country."

—United States Navy Photo



GAME GOES ON—The Navy enlisted men's recreation hall was more than a mile away from the actual explosion, yet one wall was blown completely out and another part of the building col-

lapsed. In the above scene showing the blown out wall, a shore patrolman has nonchalantly picked up a cue and is pictured making a few practice shots on one of the pool tables.

—Photo by San Francisco Examiner

*Faced with conflicting definitions
[of mutiny], the trial board sided with
the prosecution.*

persons . . . is an endeavor to make a revolt or mutiny." Commander Coakley argued that under this definition, he was not required to prove that the defendants intended to seize command. Instead, "evidence showing a joint, collective and persistent refusal by two or more men to work after a lawful order to do so" could constitute mutiny. Faced with conflicting definitions, the trial board sided with the prosecution and refused to dismiss the charge.¹¹

Coakley then had to show that there had been an organized effort or conspiracy to disobey orders among the men. On the second day of the trial his attempt to do so created another major legal battle. The prosecution presented the testimony of officers who said that they heard black sailors encouraging their compatriots not to load ammunition. The sailors reportedly used such phrases as "Don't go to work for the white m——— f———," "Let's all stick together," and "We have the officers by the b———." The problem with this "evidence" was that none of the witnesses could identify the persons who were supposed to have made these remarks. Lt. Ernest Delucchi, for example, testified that he heard the comments while standing in formation with his back to the men. Veltmann argued that this testimony was inadmissible hearsay and that even if the statements had been heard, there was no way of telling if any of the defendants had made them. Again, however, Admiral Osterhaus ruled in Coakley's favor and allowed the testimony to be entered in the record.¹²

Despite these major blows to the defense case, Veltmann and his colleagues waged a spirited legal battle. In cross-examination they forced prosecution witnesses to

admit that the defendants had been polite and respectful and had obeyed all orders except those to load ammunition. Lt. P. H. Pembroke, a navy psychiatrist, testified that the Port Chicago explosion could produce such great trauma among the survivors that the men might reasonably refuse to load ammunition out of a "sense of self-protection." He pointed out that the men had received no psychiatric assistance in dealing with this trauma. Chaplain J. M. Flowers testified that when he admitted his own fear to the defendants and urged them to overcome their fear in order to help "the men in the foxholes," one of the sailors had replied, "In the foxholes a man has a chance to fight back."¹³

The heart of the defense case was the testimony of the accused themselves, and all fifty men appeared on their own behalf. Generally, they testified that they had acted out of fear and had no intention of challenging military authority. They denied planning the work stoppage and said that a petition that had circulated among the men had only requested a change of duty, not urged men to refuse to work. None of the defendants admitted making statements encouraging others to disobey orders, and most claimed they never received individual orders to load ammunition. Many of the men said they would have obeyed such orders had they been given.¹⁴

Occasionally, the defendants' testimony included some unusual facts. Ollie Green had a broken wrist, and John Dunn was seventeen years old and weighed just 104 pounds, yet both men had been ordered to do the heavy work of loading ammunition. Joe Small described the panic that ensued among the defendants when a piece of paper became caught in the fan in the detention barrack and produced a loud, cracking noise. Several men contended that pre-trial statements taken by the judge advocate's staff were inaccurate. Alphonso MacPherson testified that during the pre-trial interview Coakley had told him to "come clean" or "you will probably get shot." Coakley angrily denied MacPherson's charge, accusing Veltmann of "hitting below the belt."

A verbal battle ensued until Admiral Osterhaus observed that MacPherson had not been shot and that it was time for lunch. When defendant Frank Henry neglected to say "sir" in answer to one of Coakley's questions, the prosecutor asked "Did you learn to say 'sir' when you talk to an officer. . . . Why don't you say it instead of being so insolent?" Veltmann vehemently objected to Coakley's remark, and this time Osterhaus agreed with the defense.¹⁵

In spite of their testimony to the contrary, it is likely that the defendants were motivated by more than fear of another explosion. Robert L. Allen, editor of *Black Scholar* magazine, has recently interviewed some of the surviving Mare Island "mutineers," and he concludes that the work stoppage was a legitimate planned protest against general conditions of segregation and discrimination in the navy and specifically against the lack of recreational facilities, safety precautions, and fair treatment at Port Chicago. At the subsequent court martial, Allen persuasively argues, fear of conviction on mutiny charges led the defendants to deny that they had planned the incident.¹⁶

Although the confidential reports and memoranda of the navy command indicate concern about the "appearance" or "semblance" of discrimination at Port Chicago, the defense lawyers never identified discrimination as an explanation or justification for the Mare Island incident. In this the lawyers were greatly at odds with leaders of the Bay Area's black community. Joseph James, president of the San Francisco branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), said he was "well aware of the pattern of discrimination practiced in the navy and very much concerned about this trial." Mrs. Irma Lewis of Oakland stated, "We mothers want to know why these loading

crews are all Negroes." Reverend C. D. Tolliver of San Francisco also felt it was "unfair that Negroes should always be assigned to dangerous tasks," and J. C. Henderson, an Oakland attorney, believed that "the discriminatory policy of the navy and the overall conditions to which the boys on trial have been subjected should be considered." Henderson explained, "Sometimes it becomes hard to turn the other cheek, even though the oppressor is our brother."¹⁷

By 1944 Bay Area black leaders were struggling to cope with the consequences of a massive increase in the region's black population. Wartime production created thousands of new industrial jobs, and black immigrants from the South were a major new source of manpower. Between 1940 and 1944, San Francisco's black population grew from less than 5,000 to over 12,000. Similar increases occurred in Oakland and Berkeley, and far greater rates of growth were recorded for the shipyard towns of Richmond and Vallejo, adjacent to Mare Island. For the region as a whole, the black population increased by more than 200 percent between 1940 and 1944.¹⁸

Local NAACP President James noted that before the war, Bay Area blacks seldom encountered "Jim Crow treatment" and "recognizing their apparent good fortune, generally exercised care lest they attract too much attention." But the population boom, James observed, had resulted in increasing examples of blatant prejudice. Housing discrimination was producing the area's first black ghetto neighborhoods. Over half the new black population worked in the shipyards, and the chief shipyard union, the boilermakers, required blacks to join segregated "auxiliary locals." In 1944, 1700 black workers at Marinship Company in Sausalito refused to pay union dues unless allowed to join the regular boiler-maker locals. The Marin County company honored its union contract by firing the rebels, but in January of 1945 the California supreme court ordered their reinstatement. Joseph James observed that by 1944 the local

NAACP branch was carrying "the burden of protest and representation for the Negro community."¹⁹

It was no surprise that the NAACP became involved in the Mare Island case. In late September, James asked assistance from the organization's New York headquarters. On October 10, Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP chief counsel, flew to San Francisco with special travel priority supplied by Navy Secretary Forrestal to observe the trial. Marshall met with prosecution and defense lawyers and interviewed all fifty defendants. He soon was convinced that the men were being unjustly prosecuted: "They have told me they were willing to go to jail to get a change of duty because of their terrific fear of explosives, but they had no idea that verbal expression of their fear constituted mutiny." Marshall stayed in the Bay Area twelve days, and his presence helped attract national attention to the trial, particularly that of the national black press. Before leaving, Marshall promised that the NAACP would "expose the whole rotten navy setup which led to the Port Chicago explosion and in turn to the so-called 'mutiny' trial." "Negroes in the navy don't mind loading ammunition," he cautioned, "they just want to know why they are the only ones doing the loading."²⁰

Meanwhile, the trial at Treasure Island droned on. On October 18, more than a month after the court martial body originally convened, the defense finally finished presentation of its case. Coakley then called several prosecution rebuttal witnesses to counter a number of allegations made by the defense. Division officers, for example, were called to deny defense testimony that crews loading ammunition had sometimes been forced to race against each other. Members of the judge advocate's staff assured the court that no coercion had been used in taking pre-trial statements and that the statements were accurate, though not always in the defendant's exact words.²¹

On October 23, Lt. Veltmann presented the defense's final argument. He repeated his objection to the mutiny

charge and argued that the defendants had taken no overt action to "usurp, subvert or overthrow" authority. Again Veltmann objected to the use of hearsay evidence and questioned whether precise orders had been given to all the men. He contended that the defendants had been motivated by understandable fear rather than a desire to seize authority.

Commander Coakley's final prosecution argument disputed Veltmann on every point. The prosecutor argued that the men had repeatedly disobeyed orders given over a three-day period. He contended that the defendants had discussed the matter among themselves and urged others to join them and that this constituted a "collective refusal" to accept authority. The men who participated in such a refusal had entered into a conspiracy to mutiny "whether they realized it or not," and fear was no defense for such a crime. Coakley concluded that "any man so depraved as to be afraid to load ammunition" deserved no leniency.²²

Apparently, Coakley's arguments were persuasive. The trial had lasted thirty-three days and produced a transcript of over 1400 pages. Theoretically, there were fifty separate sentences to decide. Yet on October 24 the trial board deliberated just eighty minutes, during which they also managed to eat lunch, and then found all the defendants guilty. The sentences were not immediately announced, but the board had unhesitatingly sentenced each man to fifteen years detention, reduction of rating to apprentice seaman, and dishonorable discharge.²³

The trial board's decision was only the first step toward final sentencing, however. Admiral Wright would review the decision, and his findings would in turn be reviewed by the advocate general's office in Washington. Finally, Secretary Forrestal would approve the final decision. At each stage, sentences could be reduced but not increased. On November 15 Admiral Wright confirmed the guilty verdicts but reduced the sentences of forty men because of youth or lack of previous misconduct. Five defendants had their confinement reduced to

Mare Island Court Martial

Seated around the table in front of the fifty accused seamen are the navy officers who conducted the men's defense at the Treasure Island court martial trial.



eight years, eleven to ten years, and twenty-four to twelve years. The remaining ten received the full fifteen-year sentences.²⁴ The men were then taken to Terminal Island Disciplinary Barracks in Southern California to begin serving their time.

Expressing shock and outrage, the November, 1944, issue of the NAACP magazine, *Crisis*, reported that Thurgood Marshall and his staff were preparing a legal brief on behalf of the convicted sailors. The magazine also quoted Marshall as saying that the men were tried "solely because of their race and color."²⁵ Marshall was more circumspect in his brief. The document, addressed to the advocate general, repeated the defense objections to the mutiny charge and to the admission of hearsay evidence. In addition, it objected to the procedure of a mass trial for all fifty defendants, arguing that this made it difficult to determine degrees of individual guilt and innocence. Marshall condemned the pre-trial publicity surrounding the case, particularly navy press releases and photographs which made it clear that all the defendants were black. Marshall also charged that Coakley had subtly injected racial prejudice into the proceedings. The prosecutor had questioned defendants from the North about their homes, for example, but not those from the South. Marshall argued that Coakley was attempting to give the impression that the incident was due to northern black ringleaders and troublemakers.²⁶

On April 3, 1945, the NAACP counsel followed up his written brief with a personal appearance at the advocate general's office in Washington, D.C. Marshall discussed his impression of the defendants, describing them as without "group cohesion" and "apart on everything, including intellect, respectfulness, if you please, and capability of making up their own minds." Half were under twenty-one, and a couple were "just plain kids." He again bitterly attacked Coakley's conduct at the trial, charging him with prejudice and unethical behavior. Marshall commented that the defense lawyers did a good job, but he argued that as naval officers they were

limited in the issues they could raise at the trial and hinted that discrimination might be one of those issues. Finally, he reminded the advocate general's staff that "the convictions will forever stand as a disgrace to the entire Negro personnel of the United States navy."²⁷

Even before Marshall's personal appearance, an advocate-general staff memorandum had raised some of the same legal points as the NAACP brief. The memo also questioned the admittance of hearsay evidence and the loose definition of mutiny accepted by the court. Accordingly, on May 17, 1945, Acting Navy Secretary Ralph A. Bard informed Admiral Wright that Forrestal wished the court martial trial board to reconvene and reconsider the case without using hearsay evidence and in light of a definition of mutiny which required a "deliberate purpose to usurp, subvert or override" authority. In effect, Forrestal was agreeing with the original defense objections, but he was not throwing out the case. He only asked the trial board to reconsider the decision. The board met briefly and on June 12 "respectfully adhered" to its original verdict. One week later Admiral Wright approved the verdict and repeated the same sentence reductions he made the previous November. On July 13 Bard announced that the navy found the proceedings at Treasure Island fair and the sentences legal, but that the secretary of the navy would still consider mitigating factors.²⁸

While the Mare Island case made its way through the navy's appeal channels, Forrestal began moving to liberalize the service's racial policies. In September, 1944, he replaced the commander of the black training facility at Great Lakes, and its rigid segregation policies began to change. In June, 1945, the bureau of naval personnel announced the full integration of all its training facilities, and in August the predominantly white members of

an integrated Great Lakes training batallion elected a black as their "honor man." In 1944 and 1945 black crews were assigned to some small combat ships, and integrated crews were tried on auxiliary vessels. In December, 1945, Forrestal finally ordered that "in the administration of naval personnel, no differentiation shall be made because of color."²⁹

Forrestal's actions were undoubtedly influenced by growing evidence of racial tension and conflict in the navy. In December, 1944, a full-scale riot broke out between black seabees and white marines on Guam. In 1945 black seabees at Port Hueneme, California, staged a hunger strike to protest discrimination. But the Mare Island "mutiny" remained the most publicized incident, and Forrestal was determined that there would be no repetition of the case. In December, 1944, he ordered that the task of ammunition loading henceforth should be given to "a cross-section of recruit-training graduates."³⁰

Forrestal's most significant action on racial matters was the appointment of Lester Granger as his "special representative" to study race relations in the navy. Granger, a black graduate of Dartmouth (Forrestal's *alma mater*), had served five years as executive secretary of the Urban League. In the six months following his navy appointment in March, 1945, Granger travelled 50,000 miles and visited sixty-seven naval installations at home and abroad. He consulted hundreds of officers and found many of them "anxious to remove barriers." He also talked to about 10,000 black sailors without their officers present. In these "heart-to-heart" discussions, the men spoke "freely and sometimes bitterly about conditions they faced daily." Granger made periodic reports to Forrestal and claimed to notice "very progressive changes" on a month-to-month basis.³¹

In this changing environment, it is not surprising that the navy brass increasingly viewed the sentences of the Mare Island defendants as unnecessarily harsh. When the war ended in August of 1945, there was no longer the

*The defense lawyers did a good job,
but . . . as naval officers they
were limited in the issues they
could raise at the trial.*

same need to "set an example." On September 8, the chief of naval personnel recommended a reduction of the men's sentences by one year. On October 15, a Captain Stassen wrote a staff memorandum to Forrestal defending the Mare Island verdict and even arguing that a "non-colored" batallion would have received tougher treatment. Nevertheless, Stassen suggested the sentences be reduced to a total of two years for defendants with good conduct records and three years for all others, with credit given for the nearly one year already served.³²

Forrestal approved Stassen's recommendations on October 17, but that was not to be the secretary's final word on the matter. Granger and perhaps other staff members pressed for full amnesty, and they convinced the secretary to agree to this proposal by the end of December. On January 6, 1946, Granger informed the *New York Times* that the sentences of most of the Mare Island defendants, along with those of thirty-six seabees arrested on Guam, would be "set aside." On January 7, more than fifteen months after the original court martial sentences, the navy officially announced that forty-seven of the fifty Mare Island sailors had been returned to active duty and would be given honorable discharges if they completed their enlistments with good records. Two other defendants in navy hospitals presumably would be returned to active duty when released from treatment. One man was kept in detention because his conduct record "did not warrant consideration." The executive officer at the Terminal Island Disciplinary Barracks informed the NAACP that the men under his

*"All restrictions . . . of assignments
for which Negro personnel are eligible
are hereby lifted."*

care had been released and were "presumably overseas."³³

Granger also told the *New York Times* that the majority of black naval personnel still were "bitterly convinced that a general policy debarred them from advancing as rapidly as their abilities warranted." But he quite accurately predicted that such policies would soon disappear. On February 27, 1946, the navy issued Circular Letter 46-48 which read: "Effective immediately all restrictions governing types of assignments for which Negro personnel are eligible are hereby lifted. Henceforth they shall be eligible for all types of assignments, in all ratings in all facilities and in all ships . . . in the utilization of housing, messing, and other facilities, no special or unusual provisions will be made for the accommodation of Negroes."³⁴ Jim Crow no longer wore a navy uniform.

In the four years from early 1942 to early 1946, the navy had moved from having the most restrictive racial policy among the armed forces to the most liberal. The monumental change had been a three-stage process moving from almost complete exclusion of blacks to segregation and then to integration. Of course, reality never fully corresponded to official policy. Racial separation was incomplete in the early war years, and racism and *de facto* segregation persisted in spite of Forrestal's orders to the contrary. In 1946 more blacks were still in the messman's service than any other naval branch. But the navy had taken a substantial step; it had removed its official sanction from segregation and white supremacy. When President Harry Truman ordered the complete integration of all armed forces in July,

1948, only the navy was already in technical if not full compliance.³⁵

In the midst of the Mare Island trial, Walter A. Gordon, a prominent black Berkeley attorney, observed that "any policy that brings about segregation based on race is bound to lead to points of conflict."³⁶ This was the lesson the navy had learned. The change in navy racial policies may have been partially due to manpower needs and the personal convictions of Forrestal and others in the service hierarchy. Pressure from civil rights groups and the black press certainly played a major role. But it was incidents such as the Mare Island "mutiny" that dramatized the ideological and moral inconsistencies of segregation and proved that black sailors would fight back against racism. It demonstrated that a segregated navy meant a disorderly navy. Lester Granger believed that the release of the Mare Island defendants reflected "the anxiety of navy officialdom to justify its racial record."³⁷ The release of the prisoners also symbolized the navy's realization that it could no longer afford the hypocrisy of segregation.

The photographs on pages 63 and 73 are Official US Navy photographs. The newspaper pages are from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 19, 1944, pages 1 and 2.

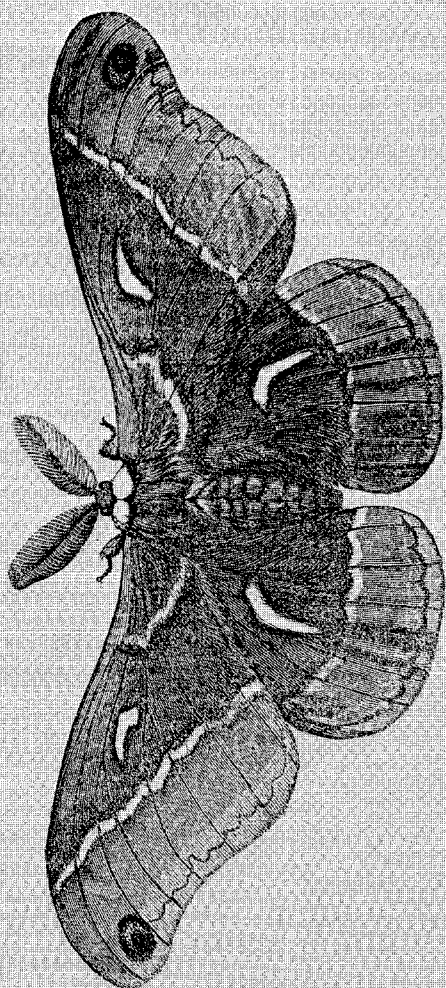
Notes

1. The best short description of the Mare Island incident is in Florence Murray, *The Negro Handbook 1946-47* (New York, 1947), p. 347-349.
2. Lawrence D. Reddick, "The Negro in the United States Navy During World War II," *Journal of Negro History*, April, 1947, p. 202-208; Richard M. Dalfiume, *Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts* (Columbia, Mo., 1969), p. 101; Lee Nichols, *Breakthrough on the Color Front* (New York: 1945), pp. 55-58; Jack D. Foner, *Blacks and the Military in American History: a New Perspective* (New York, 1974), pp. 167-170.
3. Reddick, "Negro During World War II," 209-215; Harry Lorin Binsse, "Negroes in the Navy," *Commonweal*, September

- 21, 1945, pp. 546-547; Richard J. Stillman, *Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces* (New York, 1968), pp. 22-23; Denis Nelson, *Integration of the Negro into the U.S. Navy* (New York, 1951), oo. 27-37.
4. *New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco News*, *San Francisco Examiner*, July 18, 19, 20, 1944.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Murray, *Negro Handbook*, 347-348; "Commandant, 12th Naval District, C. H. Wright to Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, 12 August, 1944," memo on microfilm, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.
7. "Commandant, 12th Naval District from N. H. Goss, 13 August, 1944," memo on microfilm, Naval Historical Center.
8. "Wright to Forrestal, 12 August, 1944."
9. "Memorandum for the President from James V. Forrestal, 28 August, 1944," microfilm, Naval Historical Center.
10. "Objection of Accused to Charge and Specification" in "Case of Julius J. Allen *et al.*, Trial Transcript," microfilm, Naval Historical Center.
11. "Judge Advocate's Trial Brief on the Law of Mutiny" in "Trial Transcript."
12. "Trial Transcript," 42-43, *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 16, 1944.
13. "Trial Transcript," 103-104, 106; *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 19, 1944.
14. "Summary Testimony in the Case of Julius J. Allen," in "Trial Transcript," 4-6.
15. "Summary Testimony," 3-6; *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 28, October 5, 6, 11, 1944; "Trial Transcript," 348-349, 368, 688-694, 106, 1000-1001.
16. Robert L. Allen, "Black Protest and Resistance in the Military During World War II: The Port Chicago 'Mutiny' of 1944," unpublished paper, San Francisco, 1978.
17. *California Eagle*, September 21, 1944; *People's World*, September 18, 1944.
18. Charles S. Johnson *et al.*, *The Negro Worker in San Francisco* (San Francisco, 1944), pp. 1-5; Miriam Roher, "Trouble Coming in California," *The New Republic*, January 21, 1946, pp. 84-85; Joseph James, "Race Relations on the Pacific Coast, San Francisco," *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, November, 1945, pp. 166-168.
19. James, "Race Relations," 167-175; "Fight Over Jim Crow," "Negro Problem Worries the Coast," "Ban Outlawed," *Business Week*, March 4, December 23, 1944, January 13, 1945.
20. *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 11, 29, 1944; *Baltimore Afro American*, October 21, 1944; *Pittsburg Courier*, October 28, 1944; *California Eagle*, October 19, 1944; *People's World*, October 17, 1944.
21. *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 18, 19, 1944; "Summary Testimony," 7-8.
22. "Trial Transcript," 1372-1435; *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 24, 25, 1944; *San Francisco News*, October 23-24.
23. "Summary Testimony," 8; *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Examiner*, October 25, 1944; *San Francisco News*, October 24, 1944.
24. "District Naval Staff Headquarters, Twelfth Naval Headquarters, 15 November, 1944," memo on microfilm, Naval History Center; *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 18-19, 1944; *New York Times*, November 19, 1944.
25. *Crisis*, November, 1944, pp. 344, 362; January, 1945, p. 20.
26. *Crisis*, April, 1945, p. 110; "Memorandum Brief for the Accused" in "Trial Transcript."
27. "Statement of Thurgood Marshall Esq., 3 Apr. 1945" in "Trial Transcript."
28. "Memorandum for Admiral Lowe 5 Feb. 1945;" "Ralph A. Bard to Commandant, 12th Naval District 17 May, 1945;" "Records of Proceedings in Revision;" "District Staff Headquarters, 12th Naval District" all on microfilm, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.; Murray, *Negro Handbook*, 349; Nelson, *Integration*, 80.
29. Nelson, *Integration*, 21, 47-49; Nichols, *Breakthrough*, 58-60; Reddick, "Negro During World War II," 217.
30. Nelson, *Integration*, 210; Reddick, "Negro During World War II," 214.
31. Lester B. Granger, "Racial Democracy, the Navy Way," *Common Ground*, Winter, 1947, pp. 61-66; Reddick, "Negro During World War II," 215-216.
32. "Secretary of Navy from Chief of Naval Personnel 8 Sept. 1945;" "Captain Stassen to the Secretary of Navy 15 Oct. 1945" memos on microfilm, Naval Historical Center.
33. *New York Times*, January 7-8, 1946; *Baltimore Afro American*, January 10, 1946; *Pittsburg Courier*, January 12, 1946.
34. Nelson, *Integration*, 21.
35. Reddick, "Negro During World War II," 218.
36. *People's World*, September 18, 1944.
37. Granger, "Racial Democracy," 67.

Pages from the Past—

THE CALIFORNIA SILK WORM.—SATURNIA CEANOETHUS.



THE CALIFORNIA SILK WORM.

For the discovery of a native silkworm in California, we are indebted to Dr. H. Behr, of this city, a German physician and naturalist, of high standing, both here and in Europe.

Experiments are now being made by several gentlemen to raise the caterpillars, and watch the development of the cocoons. The Society of Naturalists of California, are also engaged in this interesting enterprise.

Some time ago we had the pleasure of an introduction to Mr. E. Seyd, a gentleman who takes great interest in everything appertaining to the development of the vast resources of California, and who is now occupied in his experiments on the California silkworm, on quite an extensive scale. He has erected a glass house for their culture, in his garden, where from cocoons gathered from among the surrounding hills, are numerous butterflies, and upwards of ten thousand eggs, beside several hundred worms, now feeding upon the *ceanothus* bush, the shrub on which they feed.

This silkworm belongs to the class of the *Saturnias*, and is named by the discoverer, *Saturnia Ceanothus*. The *ceanothus* is an evergreen bush, growing in great abundance on nearly every hillside in California, and is easily cultivated from the seed, although it is rather difficult to transplant and preserve its life. Being an evergreen, very bushy and full of leaves, it is often cultivated in gardens, and cut into all sorts of ornamental shapes, for shades or hedges. On this plant the silkworm principally feeds; although it is also found upon the *rhamnus*, and several species of small oak.

The cocoon of this worm is very large, tough and durable. It is spun in August or September, but the butterflies do not make their appearance until March or April of the following year. These butterflies are large, and of a beautiful design, as can be seen in the engraving—their principal color being of a reddish brown, with white, black, blue and yellow spots and lines.

As soon as the chrysalis leaves the cocoon and becomes a butterfly, it seeks its companion of the opposite sex, and they never leave each other until the male dies, which is generally about three or four days, and the female follows the example of the male shortly afterwards, leaving from two to three hundred eggs, in little clusters, similar to those shown in the engraving. These are the size of life, and although small, very much resemble the chicken egg in shape and in the hardness of its shell, and which are fastened by the female to branches of the shrub by a brown gum-like substance.



Head of Female.



Eggs.

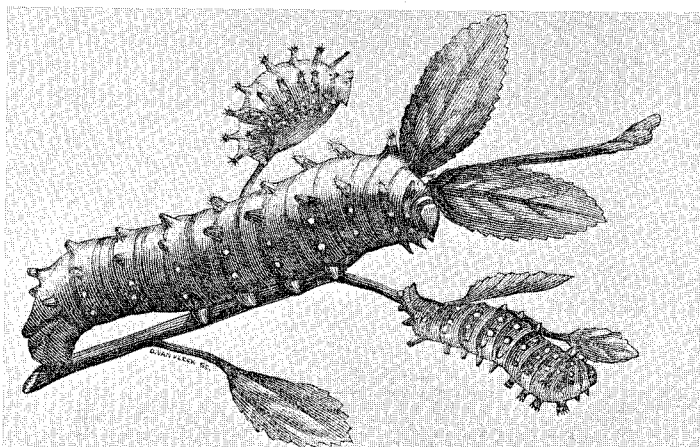
In from three to five weeks the caterpillars come out, and are about one-eighth of an inch in length, having a black body with light yellow hairs upon it. A few hours after their birth they become altogether black, when they commence feeding. After a few days have elapsed they again begin to change, and show bright yellow spots upon the body.

When about fourteen days old they change their skins entirely, and in color, become of a bright golden yellow, with black hair; by degrees this color again changes to a greenish yellow; and after a few days, upon their again changing their skin, the color changes to a beautiful green, with red, black and white spots.

When the caterpillar is fully grown, they are from two to three inches long and about one and a half inches in circumference, and are very sluggish in their movements, and not very inviting in their appearance. They now begin to spin their cocoons, first the outside, and then the inside, which generally takes from three



The California Silk Worm

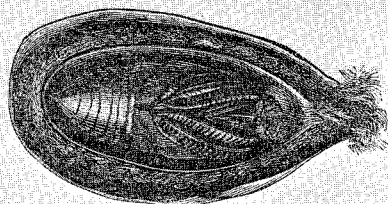


FULL-GROWN CATERPILLAR.

to five days. The cocoons, though large and firm in its outside texture has but few loose threads upon its surface which is not the case with the silkworms of the Bombyx mori species. The cocoons, too, of the latter are spun differently to the Saturnia ceanothi, or California species, inasmuch as they are spun vertically, and the Saturnia horizontally. The threads in both terminating at the top, or small end of the cocoon, leaving a closely fitted and elastic aperture through which the butterfly escapes with demolishing or injuring then cocoon, while the Bombyx mori either knows its way out or by the aid of a fluid exuding from its mouth destroys the fibre at the top, and thereby leaves the cocoon useless.

The manner in which the Saturnia ceanothi spins its cocoon may in some measure retard the successful winding of the silk, although it is a mathematical truth that if the worm spins a continued thread one way, we ought to be able to wind it off the other.

Mr. S. has succeeded in winding off parts



Chrysalis in Cocoon.

of cocoons but they being old gummy and dry, cannot be considered as a fair test of what can be done when the cocoons are fresh and new.

Some species of the Saturnia—who all spin the same way—have recently been discovered in Asia; and are just like ours, and the French have not only been successfully spinning those cocoons, but give a glowing description of the beauty, strength and durability of the silk, also they are not as large as ours.

The cultivation of the silkworm in California, is a subject of importance to our young State, and we hope that those gentlemen now engaged in such interesting ex-



Cocoon upon a branch of the Ceanothus.

periments, will, with the assistance of our Chinese population, be enabled to produce and manufacture native silk of such a quality and in such quantities, that it may become a source of profit, as it will be of pride, when the fair ladies of California rustle past us, clad in the beautiful folds of native California silk.

CALIFORNIA SHRUBBERY. THE CEANOTHUS.

It may not be generally known that there are no less than seventeen species of this most beautiful shrub known to botanists in California; twelve of these have been noticed and described, and five have yet to be. And although they grow most plentifully upon the coast, they extend from the foot hills to the height of six thousand feet above the sea, in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada.

The following list of the names and colors of this shrub, will no doubt be interesting to our readers:

Name.	Color.
CEANOTHUS, dentatus,	deep blue.
" rigidus,	do.
" papillosum,	do.
" cuneatus,	White.
" integerrimus,	Yellow-white.
" incana,	Lilac.
" oliganthus,	Pale blue.
" thrysiflorus,	do.
" divaricatus,	do.
" hirsutus,	Blue.
" verrucosus,	do.
" prostratus,	Pale lilac.
" sp., not named,	White.
" sp.,	Blue.
" sp.,	Bluish purple.
" sp.,	White.
" sp.,	Blue.

Reviews

Charles Wollenberg, *Reviews Editor*

Karl Feichtmeir

The On-line Information Revolution in California

Research in under thirty seconds? Students of California history will hail the exciting, almost revolutionary research tool which is now available. High-speed computers to search subject files of bibliographic citations provide access to literature of almost any imaginable topic. The searching is conducted on a terminal similar to a typewriter, eliminating the necessity for a knowledge of computer processes. When the terminal is connected to one of several commercially operated central retrieval systems (large computers which provide this service), one has access to several hundred different subjects stored in computer memories called "databases." Any one of these databases can hold up to a million-and-a-half bibliographic citations to articles, books, and theses, plus newspapers and magazines, written on a given subject. The advantages of searching a database rather than its counterpart—printed abstracts and indexes—is that citations are located instantly and can be printed out on a terminal before the researcher's eyes. This almost magical immediacy is referred to as "on-line" or "computer-based" bibliographic retrieval. It was pioneered in California and is rapidly growing into a profitable worldwide business.

In 1954, at the Naval Ordnance Test Station in China Lake, California, what was probably the first computer system to search and retrieve bibliographical references was assembled. The advantages were dramatic: more citations could be stored in less space; more detailed indexing was facilitated, making possible better access; and speed and cost were improved over previous indexing systems, such as the card catalog or printed index.

By 1964, Lockheed Missiles and Space Company in Palo Alto, California, initiated research on a retrieval system to store citations and provide access to NASA's entire collection of 200,000 technical reports. To accomplish this feat, the system analysts at Lockheed devel-

Karl Feichtmeir is the Manuscript Librarian of the California Historical Society Library.

oped an entirely new computer system. Basically, it made use of a larger memory and more sophisticated program which decreased the time the computer needed to locate specific citations. Another advantage over previous computer-based indexing systems was its ability to allow several users simultaneously to ask for and retrieve citations to literature indexed in the computer's memory.

Concurrently, another California firm, Systems Development Corporation located in Santa Monica, was testing and perfecting the first "nationwide" on-line retrieval network using 200,000 records obtained from thirteen government agencies (such as the FBI). The project was funded by a grant from the federal government, in part because law enforcement agencies were interested in getting information quickly. Terminals located throughout the country were connected by telephone or other communications lines to the central computer in Santa Monica. The system was sufficiently advanced to allow several dozen users to connect into the main computer and to ask and receive information. This breakthrough ushered in what many have termed the "on-line revolution." It marked the beginning of instant access to computer databases containing several hundred thousand items of information.

In 1968 Lockheed contracted with another government agency, the U.S. Office of Education, to provide on-line bibliographic access for books, periodicals, and papers at the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). The birth of the ERIC database allowed the inclusion and automatic indexing of recent literature citations into the existing databases. This "updating" potential eliminated the problem of re-alphabetizing and re-printing yearly which is inescapable with any printed abstracts and indexes. The addition of current literature into the database meant that everything was located in one file, unlike its printed counterpart wherein published supplements would not be indexed until the year following publication. This updating has proved invaluable

This typical portable terminal is used for on-line bibliographic searching. It can be attached to any telephone, and it will print the database's citations on paper. The user simply dials the number of a commercial database vendor and enters a unique code number similar to a credit card number. The information print-out follows.

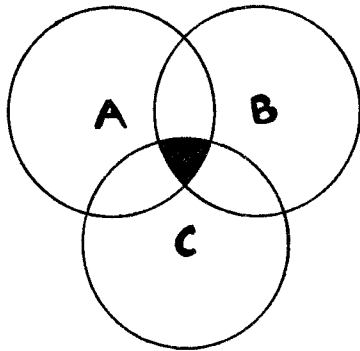


for researchers, particularly in the fields of medicine and science.

By the late sixties a number of on-line systems were being tested nationwide. But it was the two California companies, Lockheed and Systems Development Corporation, which first contracted with numerous governmental agencies to provide databases. By 1971 Lockheed was developing a computerized database for the National Agricultural Library as well as the National Technical Information Service. Systems Development Corporation meanwhile had contracted with the National Library of Medicine to put their holdings onto a database.

Until 1972 both companies were involved in creating these computerized indexes or databases to store the literature of governmental agencies, universities, and businesses. But in that year both companies independently decided to create their own commercial retrieval system by buying or leasing copies of existing databases, many of which they had helped to develop. The result

In the diagram, "A" represents those citations relating to history; "B" represents those relating to California; and "C" represents those relating to aviation. When the three terms are combined "on-line," the result is a listing of citations for literature on the history of aviation in California (as represented by the darkened area of the overlapping circles).



was a scramble to obtain the most comprehensive collection of databases on subjects which business and industry would pay to see. Other companies sprang up which did nothing but create databases to lease to these two growing California firms. Agricultural, engineering, and nuclear energy databases were developed. Despite the competition between Lockheed and Systems Development Corporation, both had plenty of clients who were eager to use their services. In fact, the only area where competition lagged was in pricing. Both charged very high rates calculated on the database used and the length of time the user's terminal was connected.

Finally, towards the end of 1977, a third, non-California database company, located in Schenectady, New York, began operation with the expressed purpose of forcing Lockheed and Systems Development Corporation to lower their prices. The California monopoly, as it had become known, was broken, and the rates charged to customers dropped, though not appreciably.

In 1978 three more companies entered the database vending market. One of these, owned by the New York Times Company, had finally developed databases for magazines and newspapers. Included are the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Los Angeles Times*, although the papers are indexed only as far back as 1972. Other vendors have seen the potential market for non-

technical, general interest databases, too, and are consequently developing additional databases relating to the social sciences and the humanities.

To date, approximately 170 different subjects are available on commercially vended databases—from history to science to government documents. The considerable, if slowly decreasing, expense of using on-line services, however, has forced users to prepare "search strategies" before connecting their terminal to an on-line retrieval vendor. Strategies involve locating key terms that relate to the subject to be searched. The terms are found in the thesaurus specifically developed for each database. Some databases, however, do not have thesauruses, and the searcher must make up his own terms. By using Boolean logic (see diagram) to connect terms, a skilled searcher can locate citations for extremely specific topics. Each printed citation usually includes the following: personal author, corporate author, document title, journal citation, keyword phrases, report number, language, and abstract.

Samples from a search utilizing the two available primary databases on history follow this text. This search was run for the CHS Library Director, Gary Kurutz, whose research interest is the history of aviation in California. The search was done by the General Reference Department at the University of California, Berkeley, and it took nineteen minutes and fifty-one seconds. The complete cost, including a printout of the citations, was \$47.00. While this is an exorbitant figure, the results of the search may justify the expense: twenty relevant citations were retrieved, none of which were previously known to the researcher who had spent one year investigating the literature on the history of aviation in California.

The possibilities for using on-line searching for historical or any other research purposes are limitless, despite the fact that most databases index retrospective literature dating back only to 1960 (exceptions are the databases for history abstracts and Comprehensive

Dissertation Abstracts). The expense of this kind of research presents problems, but it is continuing to drop toward an affordable level. Moreover, with the increased yearly costs of printed abstracts, many libraries may be forced to cancel their purchases and turn instead to on-line services. Reacting to this possibility, a number of California public and university libraries have already implemented an on-line search service.

Today, the proliferation of databases will amaze the old-school researcher. Universities and businesses are

creating their own, storing their records by utilizing the computer equipment they often already own. In fact many professional associations are indexing their journals onto databases and then leasing them to various database vendors. It should not be many years before a separate database is created for the subject of California history. This will surely index the numerous runs of important periodicals like the *Wasp*, *Argonaut*, *Sunset*, *Westways*, *Out West*, as well as the many journals which currently do not enjoy complete conventional indexing.

? T10/5/1-10

10/5/1

0372925 14A-02676

EDDIE NEHER-EARLY AIR MAIL PILOT.

Foote, Virginia.

Publ: Pacific Historian 1969 13(4): 63-71.

Eddie Neher lost his life flying the mail in 1927. Before that, however, he and his friend, Lou Foote, enjoyed some uproarious times barnstorming California in the early days of aviation. Describes several of the stunts these early pilots would execute. 3 photos, 3 notes.

F. I. Murphy

Identifiers: Air mail pilot ; Neher, Eddie ; Barnstorming ; California

10/5/2

0323600 13A-03374

FROM MOSCOW TO A COW PASTURE IN AMERICA.

Cole, Martin.

Publ: Am. West 1975 12(1): 10-13.

Narrates the July 1937 flight of three Russians from Moscow to California. The trans-polar flight established a new nonstop distance record.

D. L. Smith

Identifiers: Trans-polar flight (nonstop) ; Aeronautics ; USSR (Moscow) ; California

10/5/6

0277365 12A-06990

BIRDMEN OVER DOMINGUEZ HILL.

Ashkenazy, Irvin.

Publ: Westways 1975 67(1): 14-16, 71, 72.

History of the first air meet in the United States, at Dominguez Hill, California.

S

Identifiers: Airships ; California (Dominguez Hill) ; Air meet

Book Reviews

A Gold Rush Voyage on the Bark Orion from Boston around Cape Horn to San Francisco, 1849-1850.

Edited by Robert W. Wienpahl. (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1978. 298 pp. \$18.25.)

Reviewed by David Hull, Chief Librarian of the National Maritime Museum in San Francisco and author of articles on maritime history and museum libraries.

Reading an account of a sea voyage is like working in the garden. In intimate contact with nature, one finds that the sense of time passing recedes. Relaxation vies for the appraisal with boredom as one counts and recounts the descriptions of making and taking in sail, the longitude and latitude notes, and the entries, "Nothing of importance transpired today."

This work would have done well to have included a sail plan (on the back cover of the dust jacket, for instance, which is entirely blank and therefore wasted), for if the reader knows the sails, then different images of the bark will spring up in his mind as he reads the accounts of making and taking in sail. It is by that imagination and by following the vessel's progress on a chart (which in this work is very conveniently placed on the outer part of a foldout so that it can be placed handy at all times to the text) that an ineluctable sense of passage is produced. It is this sense of passage that carries the reader in the genre of passage accounts.

Couched in the passage are incidents, related and unrelated, of varying degrees of interest. The account of passage thereby becomes a microcosm. In this account, there is a "doctor" who deliberately poisons—nearly—the second mate and three men, and there are brigs and whalers and other barks and porpoise- and shark-fishing and adventures in Rio de Janeiro. Of particular interest in this work is the fact that four separate accounts—two are contemporary and two are recountings—of the same passage are drawn upon; the interest of each day's incidents is thereby multiplied by four varying points of view. There is also change within the chroniclers: Jenkins, at nineteen the youngest, begins by grimly reflecting upon "the trackless ocean, which we must expect to be our home for at least five or six months," but within a month he exults while rowing one of the bark's boats for exercise:

Never did my eyes set on so magnificent a spectacle as on our barque when we beheld her at the distance of a few hundred yards with no other object in view save the clear blue sky above our heads and

the blue waters beneath us, and we as it were a speck in comparison whilst her sails were slating loosely against the masts and she continually rising and falling with a grace which nothing can rival . . . I felt proud of my new home.

Editing is no mean task, for the weight of selection may be fully as present for the editor as it is for the composing writer, and Dr. Wienpahl has produced a very interesting work in the genre of passage accounts. He commendably has outlined in his Introduction the principles of his editing. My only criticism of the editing is that at the onset of the fourth chronicler—of whom Dr. Wienpahl did warn in the Introduction as being very garbled—the flow of reading is disrupted by the chronicler's report that he signed onto the *Urania*! What happened to the *Orion*? A simple editorial, "i.e., *Orion*" was in order.

But then, as soon as I figured out that all was well, I began to marvel; this fourth chronicler had the name of the vessel wrong, and a number of dates wrong as well—how did Dr. Wienpahl ever match this account with the *Orion*? Immersion is the answer. That matching is the measure of the editor's immersion in the subject of gold rush passages, for the events of the passage do match those of the *Orion* and the editor is certainly correct. His immersion is apparent also from footnotes that cite other passage accounts wherein a vessel speaks a vessel that *Orion* has spoken; that sort of information is not available in any library's catalog.

Dr. Wienpahl's scholarship is as exacting as his immersion is impressive, and his account of the gold rush shipping scene is the best summary I have seen anywhere. His description of the source journals would warm the heart of a descriptive bibliographer. He is himself a navigator—he completed the position reckonings for several entries (and he wrote the Introduction aboard his own vessel).

It is good that his supportive material includes a passenger and crew list, special attention to the backgrounds of chroniclers, an abstract log, the ownership record of *Orion*, and a bibliography. Most laudably, he includes a very good six-page index which treats subjects as well as names; the index is an adjunct indispensable in any historical subject, especially in the field of maritime history whose works so often even in modern times lack indexes.

The book is pleasingly designed and printed on attractive paper. In spite of the \$18.25 price, here is a book that belongs in at least every West Coast library with a history section. I also recommend it to the individual with an interest in sailing or in his roots on the west coast.

*Specialty crops and big machines have
long characterized California's agriculture.
Here a work crew places fumigating
tents over young orange trees
in Southern California.*

*As You Sow: Three Studies in the Social
Consequences of Agribusiness.*

By Walter Goldschmidt. Foreword by Senator Gaylord Nelson. (Montclair, New Jersey: Allanheld, Osmun and Co., 1947. Reprint 1978. liv, 505 pp. \$16.50.)

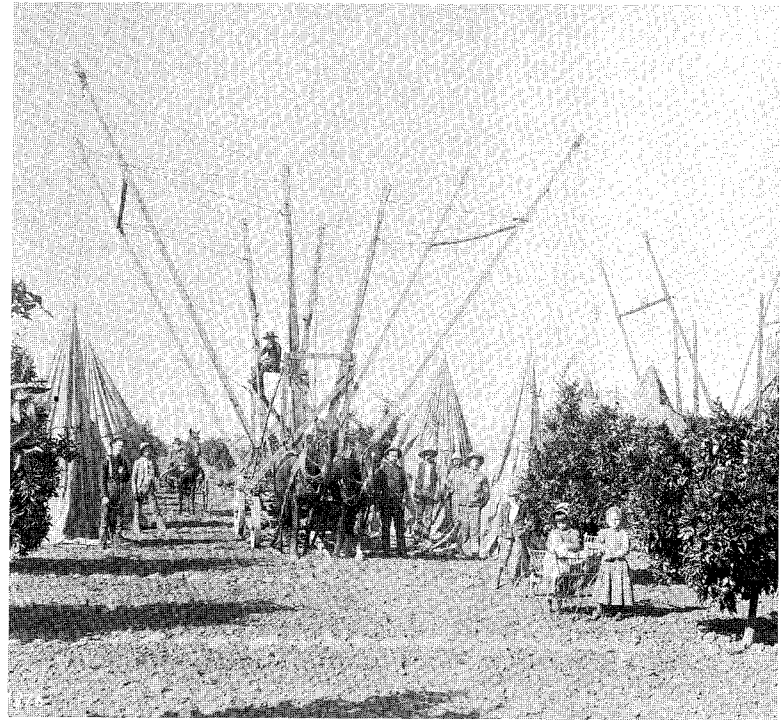
Reviewed by Peter R. Decker, Assistant Professor of Policy Sciences and History, Duke University, and author of Fortunes and Failures: White-Collar Mobility in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco (1978).

Approximately once every decade since the end of World War II, Congress becomes interested in the plight of small farmers in this country. Series of witnesses exclaim about the wonders of modern agriculture—higher yields with increased mechanization—while a few minority voices detail the social havoc of our agricultural policy. Always the most informed testimony to this latter view is that of Walter Goldschmidt, Professor of Anthropology and Psychiatry at the University of California at Los Angeles, whose research in the 1940s on the social effects of industrialized agribusiness in California has been brought together under one cover.

This new edition includes the classic title piece, plus "Agriculture and the Rural Committee" which originally appeared in 1946 as a Committee Print of the Senate Small Business Committee. In addition, there is a new chapter which details the efforts of congress, business interests, academics, and the media to discredit Professor Goldschmidt's scholarship. A superb Introduction serves to place into a contemporary context the effects of corporate agriculture upon rural communities throughout the United States.

The first part of the book demonstrates, through a detailed examination of one community (Wasco, California), the social havoc wrought by industrialized agricultural production. With increased crop specialization and mechanization, the town becomes more dependent upon external utility companies, banks, and markets. Local autonomy is eroded, while within the town itself there is increased social differentiation and conflict.

Where large-scale and corporate agriculture develops, it follows not only that there are great differences in the level of control among the managerial group, but that a cadre of economically dependent laborers will emerge. From this there follows a system of social distinctions, with a powerful group and a relatively alienated and disaffected working class. The economically and socially advanced



group look outside the community for both their economic and social needs, so that both local business and social organizations wither. Increased power in the hands of a small sector tends to be self-reinforcing . . . unless measures are taken to counteract it.

In the second part of the book, two farming towns, Arvin and Dinuba, are compared with each other to support Goldschmidt's central thesis. The first town is characterized by large-scale industrial agriculture and a high degree of concentrated economic power. In Dinuba, farms are smaller, less capital-intensive, hence the community supports more local businesses, a higher average standard of living, more schools, and civic organizations. Where Arvin is more dependent upon decisions made external to the town, Dinuba possesses the internal resources to "provide the basis for a richer community life."

In the last section, where Goldschmidt details the efforts of agribusiness and their representatives to discredit his research, he documents "how knowledge gets suppressed and truth distorted, how bureaucracies are entered and destroyed, how national policies are subverted, and the character of our nation reshaped."

*Striking longshoremen and warehousemen
on the San Francisco waterfront in 1934
blocked rail shipments to Bay
Area warehouses.*

This is an important book because Goldschmidt raises important questions about the social consequences of agribusiness. He argues convincingly against the economies of large-scale production units when he includes in his calculus the quality of people's lives, measured not in cash income but social relationships. By today's standards, Goldschmidt's methodology is, in part, outdated; also the book lacks analytical focus and depth. Nevertheless, this pioneer study stands virtually alone in its systematic critique of American industrial agriculture. From the perspective of a Jeffersonian democrat, he has raised some important questions, and his findings should command the attention of scholars and government officials whose "expertise" and policies have forced millions of small farmers off the land.

It is a sad commentary on the history profession that so little of our agricultural or, in fact, our social history today asks those questions which Professor Goldschmidt so thoroughly addressed some thirty years ago. The issues raised by *As You Sow* transcend California, for they affect not only a large segment of the American rural population but, more significantly, the future direction of all developing nations in the world today.

*The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU
Warehouse Division, 1934-1938.*

By Harvey Schwartz. (Los Angeles Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1978. xii, 262 pp. \$7.50.)

*Reviewed by David F. Selvin, labor journalist and historian
whose writings include biographies of Samuel Gompers and
Eugene Debs.*

The march inland in the late 1930s gave lasting shape and thrust to labor relations in the San Francisco Bay Area. It spurred unionization in the warehouses at a time when they were a strategic key to the area's economy. It encouraged organization of unions in businesses tangential to the warehouse industry. It helped implant the multi-employer pattern that became the hallmark of San Francisco bargaining. It gave fresh impetus to the mighty upsurge of union organization that marked the decade. It was, too, a fierce, determined, sometimes bitter, and decisive battle at a crucial moment.



The march grew initially from the longshoremen's need to protect their uptown flank. It soon burst these confines, though—invading the uptown shops, moving into outlying houses, rallying some 8,500 warehouse workers to its cause, becoming in fact a march inland. It stamped a clear imprint, still legible today, on Bay Area labor relations—and on the jobs and lives of thousands whom it touched.

Schwartz's book tells the reader in abundant detail how it all came about—more, I suspect, than any but the most esoteric student of labor might be interested in knowing. It's a useful contribution; it examines closely a period and a chain of events often overlooked, often underestimated. If its literary style is pedestrian, it walks at least on solid footings. But it isn't for the casual reader, nor the passerby simply curious about what went on, nor for the student in search of something of the quality of the time.

My problem with the book is my feeling that it bypasses the big picture in favor of what sometimes seemed endless i-dotting and t-crossing. I got no feel of the times. I got no sense of the anger or frustration that sometimes drove, often encouraged workers to organize, to strike, to fight back. I got no explanation of the real anger in the employers' drive to wipe out the rising unions or, failing that, to force into being "properly conducted" unions of Mr. Dooley's legendary sort: "No strikes, no rules, no contracts, no scales, hardly

any wages an' damn few members." I got no diagnosis of the contagion that spread the union idea from one warehouse to another, from workers in one Bay Area business to those in countless others. I got no feel of the surging dynamic that gave the march its strength and its meaning.

I may have fallen into a critic's trap: I may be unfairly criticizing Schwartz for not writing the book I think should have been written—instead of the book he chose to write. That's not my intent, but I cannot avoid the feeling—I hope it isn't nostalgia—that somehow much that is vital to a real understanding of the time has been overlooked. A big, fat, wide-angle lens, rather than a micro, would have shown more people's faces and fewer contract clauses. People's faces, I think, are what it was all about.

I add, too, that the book's drab design does no favor for its publisher or its author. It's a gussied-up, offset copy of a typed manuscript. But Governor Brown should be happy to learn that the Institute is getting \$7.50 for it.

Suddenly San Francisco: The Early Years of an Instant City.

By Charles Lockwood. (San Francisco: A California Living Book, 1978. 176 pp. \$9.95.)

Reviewed by Charles Wollenberg, Reviews Editor of California History magazine.

If someone were to appoint me Chief Censor, my first act would be to ban publication of new books which take for granted San Francisco's unique historical experience as an "instant city." According to Charles Lockwood, "one of the best stories about San Francisco has yet to be fully told—the story of how San Francisco, within a few decades of the Gold Rush, became a city." I beg to differ. During just the past five years, at least five books have been published which emphasize that very story.

Perhaps it is unfair to single out *Suddenly San Francisco* for criticism, for the book has many excellent qualities. Lockwood presents an impressionistic survey of San Francisco growth and society between the Gold Rush and the 1906 earthquake, and in the process he touches on many fascinating topics. The book is well-written, attractively designed in an oversized paperback format, and contains a good col-

lection of historical photographs. In short, it is a work that San Franciscophiles will enjoy.

I do, however, question some of the author's emphases. He extensively covers the role of women as prostitutes but ignores the efforts of Jane Stanford and Phoebe Hearst to build the area's major universities and Kate Wiggin's innovations in primary education. Lockwood also largely ignores struggles between labor and capital and the fact that nineteenth-century San Francisco was a city of immigrants, with a large majority of the population either foreign-born or children of foreign-born parents. Finally, Lockwood perpetuates some myths that have little basis in fact: there is no evidence that Forty-niners sent their laundry to China or that Elizabeth Gordon made her daughter an alcoholic by lacing the child's food with demon rum.

But the major problem with this book is simply that the theme of San Francisco's emergence as an "instant city" already has been extensively covered in other recent works. No one would argue that the frantic Gold Rush experience did not influence the city's later history, but we need careful analyses of the extent of that influence. In particular, scholars should compare San Francisco's nineteenth-century development with that of midwestern and eastern cities, some of which grew far more rapidly than San Francisco after the 1850s. It is time to integrate the San Francisco story into the general history of urban growth in the United States.

A Guide to Historic Places in Los Angeles County.

Edited by Judson A. Grenier and others. Prepared under the auspices of the History Team of the City of Los Angeles American Revolution Bicentennial Committee. (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall-Hunt Publishing Company, 1978. 324 pp. \$4.95.)

Reviewed by John E. Baur, Professor of History at California State University, Northridge, and author of four books and many articles on California and the West.

The destiny of this paperback volume is not to stand on a library shelf and gather dust, nor to catch one's passing glance on a coffee table, but to lie temporarily in a glove compartment before frequently fitting into the hand of a visitor to the

Los Angeles County sightseers prepare to enjoy a tramride ascending Mt. Lowe.

Los Angeles area's historic sites which it ably chronicles. Since pioneer days this region has been a sure subject for guidebooks and histories. Combining both roles, the present work follows the tradition of Rensch and Rensch's *Historic Spots of California*, Aubrey Drury's *California, An Intimate Guide*, and for its own area the Federal Writers publication composed in the Depression period.

Readers will find this slender tome practical in detailing routes to the more than four hundred historic sites listed, the hours they are open, facilities available, and fees, if any. Private residences, not open to the public, are also noted. Very much up to the moment, the guide warns that Proposition 13 may already be modifying some of the conditions stated! Suggestions on traffic conditions and neighborhood parking possibilities would have expanded this practical approach.

William Mason, Judson Grenier, Abraham Hoffman, and Richard G. Lillard have provided four well-balanced, chronological introductory chapters entitled: "Indians and Mexicans," "Rancho to Boomtown," "From Boom to Depression," and "Big-Time Growth and Consequences," which trace Los Angeles' main periods and set its historic sites in general perspective.

These places are catalogued within a dozen regional zones, each preceded with a rather smallish map on which the sites' assigned numbers are superimposed. As John W. Caughey states in his foreword, the choice of sites is representational. The History Team of the City of Los Angeles American Revolution Bicentennial with the Associated Historical Societies of Los Angeles County rightly deleted from an original list most of the places which were merely marked by plaques where historic buildings once stood, rather than disappoint visitors. Editors have also wisely selected excellent photographs of historic structures. And what a marvelous diversity resulted! Selections vary from San Gabriel Mission to the *Queen Mary*, with many excellent examples for tracing ethnic history, points of geographic interest, and every sort of style in Angeleno architecture. Occasionally the editors critically comment on the poor upkeep of some sites, for theirs is no sugar-coated promotional publication.

Some flaws do appear, but considering the compact wealth of factual information, the few misspellings seem inevitable. A sturdier cover is needed, for this guide will soon show the wear of heavy use by teachers, students, tourists, "Southland" buffs, and not a few historians. Needed also is a longer bibliography including several excellent monographs on par-



ticular eras—Cleland's treatment of the early American period and Dumke on the Boom—accompanied with brief critiques of each; mere book titles never tell enough.

By its nature this work will quickly become obsolete, requiring newer editions, which should cover more recent places of consequence. Along with its celebration of Los Angeles' remarkable past, this handbook makes sadly obvious how harshly "progress" has obliterated evidences of the last two centuries. This welcome compilation will help us honor that bicentennial two years hence.

The Battle of Santa Clara.

By Dorothy F. Regnery. (San Jose: Smith and McKay Printing Co., 1978. 154 pp. \$20.00.)

Francisco Pacheco of Pacheco Pass.

By Dr. Albert Shumate. (Stockton: University of the Pacific, 1977. 47 pp. \$4.50.)

Reviewed by Seonaid McArthur, Acting Director of the California History Center, De Anza College, Cupertino.

The Battle of Santa Clara by Dorothy Regnery, thoroughly documented and printed in a handsome format, convincingly portrays the causes for and significance of the only resistance in Northern California during the American-Mexican War. The Santa Clara campaign, which involved 100 Californios and 100 US Marines, occurred from mid-December, 1846, to the first week of January, 1847. Regnery's detailed account of the battle clarifies the unique political climate in the north and offers a lesson in history about events equally important to those which surrounded the Southern California battle and Treaty of Cahuenga. Making use of previously unpublished sources, Regnery includes the account of the Treaty of Santa Clara in which the Californios were granted their rights and honor.

The volume carefully combines primary source documentation for the researcher-historian with narrative and beautifully executed illustrations for the discerning casual reader. Regnery has obviously made exhaustive efforts to locate every letter, military order or personal journal that might shed some light on the individuals participating in the conflict. One major oversight appears to be the barely recognizable use of sources in Spanish. The primary source texts in English are presented in their entirety, shedding light not only upon the intricate politics of the day, but also (primarily from the Anglo-Saxon viewpoint) the personalities that enmeshed themselves and instigated the conflict. In the author's words, "Some men were great, some men were pitifully weak and frightened while stalking like bullies, and others were selfish, domineering and grasping." Over half the book deals with the prelude to the battle and the role a few foreigners played in exploiting the local rancheros and turning the northern populace against the American conquerors. The actual battle of Santa Clara is documented through the words of the commanding officer, Captain Ward Marston,

and through illustrations, many of which are published here for the first time.

In another work of local history focusing on the southern reaches of the San Francisco Bay peninsula, Dr. Albert Shumate, in his volume *Francisco Pacheco of Pacheco Pass*, examines the life and times of a family that has left its mark on the region. As one drives today over the vast rolling hills surrounding Pacheco Pass and notes the transitions urbanization has brought to the area, it is refreshing to imagine the region as the thriving cattle ranch described by Shumate. The author's use of newspaper accounts of the era, family letters, and merchants' records from Monterey provides welcome information, specifically on how the ranchero family lived, their major items of trade, their thirst for land and political power, and the impact of the Gringo Gold-seeker upon the unsuspecting Californio. Because the Pacheco lands eventually included 150,000 acres, the family experienced extensive negotiations with the US government following statehood. Shumate's information on how the American Land Claims Commission affected this one family provides a clearer understanding of similar events which took place throughout the state.

Francisco Pacheco of Pacheco Pass is not a romanticized account of the Californio based on legend and artistic trappings, but a narrative filled with direct and concise information about the remarkable Pacheco family and their times. The book provides valuable information on an era we know too little about and tells the story of a Californio clan whose significance only begins to be recognized here.

The Italians of San Francisco, 1850-1930.

By Deanna Paoli Gumina. (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1978. 230 pp. \$7.95.)

Reviewed by Andrew Rolle, author of The American Italians (1972), The Immigrant Upraised (1968), and California: A History (1978). He is Cleland Professor of History, Occidental College, Los Angeles.

Publication of this book coincides with the recent opening of a splendid new ethnic museum at North Beach which heavily features the contributions of San Francisco's Italians. Too

San Francisco children line up with other Bank of America depositors on a Saturday morning in 1918 to take advantage of A. P. Giannini's savings plan for the young. The Saturday "open door" bank policy was a Giannini innovation of the time.

many years have passed during which our minorities have languished in anonymity. This is the first systematic attempt to recapture the story of Italians at the Golden Gate. It is presented in a bilingual edition in pages running side-by-side.

The best local histories, ethnic or otherwise, need to establish a link outside a community, looking at the macrocosm beyond a microcosm. Although this particular volume utilizes local sources admirably, the author has paid no attention to histories written within the last ten years that contain insights about the Italian experience nationally. This valuable wider historiography, ideally, must interact with what local historians seek to describe. The result can be a fruitful synthesis. Tighter editorial supervision could have enhanced the scope of this first volume on so complicated a subject, also reducing, incidentally, the number of typographical errors and improving the index.

In her Introduction, Mrs. Gumina discusses the difficulties of piecing together a fragmented and disparate record. Her book "does not pretend to be a definitive account. . . ." Without disparaging the heavy spade work done by the author ("immigration history" is one of the most difficult of literary forms), this book has other built-in limitations. Its terminal date (1930), for example, would seem to exclude discussion of the fine Italian restaurants that have flourished in the city even before the past forty years. Surely mention of at least a few of these should have been made, for example the Fior d'Italia, which was founded long before 1930. One misses an entry for "restaurants" in the index (even though the last word in the book is "cuisine"). The author does, however, point out the Italian involvement in fishing, wine production, the theater, agriculture in general, and such trades as baking.

Among other gaps that come randomly to mind is the important record preserved by the photographer J. B. Monaco (1856-1938), whose work is so prominently displayed in the new North Beach Museum. One misses extended treatment of Italians associated with the life of the city, for example, of the famous Molinari family (sausage production, delicatessen, and, latterly, politics). The story of the great tenor Enrico Caruso's stay in San Francisco during the 1906 earthquake and fire years to be told fully. More could have been written about Leonetto Cipriani, the aristocratic patriot who recorded his stay in *Memorie della mia vita* (2 vols., Bologna, 1934). My own *The Immigrant Upraised* (1968) included a number of such travelers who visited the San Francisco Italian community and who described it



graphically for the outside world. Their views give an added perspective to the local one. Gumina does utilize one of these accounts, also published in Italy, during 1881, by Giovanni del Ferro (although he too is not listed in the index).

Immigrants were not uniformly proud of their origins. Some wished to remain Italian and to recreate a way of life they had known in Italy. Others, like the banker A. P. Giannini and members of the DiMaggio and Alioto families, became closely associated with America's materialistic life patterns. However, the particular vibrancy and upward mobility of the San Francisco Italians makes their story a joy to read. There is relatively little of the depressing and down-trodden sense of defeat that eastern immigration historians have depicted.

In short, Gumina has done a fine archival job upon which later writers can build, bringing the story of this particular ethnic group up to the present.

The Education of Non-Whites in California, 1849-1970.

By Irving G. Hendrick. (San Francisco: R & E Research Associates, 1977. ix, 165 pp. \$10.00.)

Reviewed by Doris Fine, Ph.D. candidate in sociology and education at the University of California, Berkeley, and co-author of a forthcoming book on the impact of race on school policies in five Bay Area school districts.

Histories of education in California generally fail to include the experiences of non-white children. Professor Hendrick's report therefore provides a much-needed description and analysis of the educational opportunities that existed for Indian, Mexican, Asian, Negro and other non-white children in California.

Needless to say, it is not a pleasant story. The liberal rhetoric of "liberty and justice for all" finds little validation in the facts of California school history. These liberal values failed to arouse the leadership or infuse the institutions of public education. On the contrary, the story of non-white education in California reveals the widespread existence of local prejudice against non-whites, and their exclusion, segregation, and isolation in public programs of education.

At one time or another, all non-whites were the victims of state and local discrimination and were deprived of equal opportunities. California, in mid-nineteenth century, was regarded by state leaders as the manifest destiny of white men. Social and economic opportunities such as schooling were withheld or only partially available to members of "inferior" or "foreign" races.

In addition to racial prejudice, the economic subjugation of non-white peoples was equally a factor behind the systematic exclusion and segregation of racial minority children: Indian children were captured and used as servants; Chinese were recruited for railroad construction and mining manpower; Mexicans provided the labor for California's agricultural production; and blacks were relegated to menial jobs unwanted by white workers.

Twentieth-century industrial progress brought little relief for non-whites. Progressive legislation, such as compulsory school attendance laws for Mexican migrant children, compounded hardships by restricting economic activities while failing to provide meaningful educational programs. In the

Education of California's white and minority children in one classroom was the subject of this racist cartoon from the March, 1907, issue of the San Francisco Call.

The Big Stick



interests of assimilation and Americanization, national policy toward the education of Indian children virtually liquidated the cultural heritage and traditions of these remarkable people. The doctrine of "separate but equal" governed whatever schooling was grudgingly made available to Asians, Mexicans, and Negroes.

Protests against the massive and cruel treatment afforded non-whites were sporadic and, until the 1960s, totally lacking in social support. Black-Americans were particularly persistent in challenging the inequity of their conditions. Regardless, schooling for blacks has remained largely segregated and of inferior quality. Currently, more than 150,000 black children, 37 percent of the state-wide total, are attending schools that are 90 percent or more black.

For many years a marginal matter, the education of non-white children in the public schools of California is now a central priority. Professor Hendrick's scholarly report suggests that the historic neglect and maltreatment of racial minorities may be a factor in the overall deterioration in quality that characterizes today's public schools.

The San Francisco Irish, 1850-1976.

Edited by James P. Walsh. (San Francisco: Irish Literary and Historical Society, 1978. 150 pp. \$15.00.)

Reviewed by Father John B. McGloin, a long-time member of the History Department at the University of San Francisco.

This volume, well edited by Professor Walsh of San Jose State University's History Department and published under the auspices of the San Francisco-based Irish Literary and Historical Society, represents a solid step forward in filling a need in San Francisco's history for an analysis of the important part which various ethnic groups have played in the city's past. Because the volume consists of ten different essays (three by Professor Walsh himself), it is difficult to assess the book in its entirety. Rather than therefore entering into a detailed recounting of the contents of each essay, let it only be said that students of the subject of the Irish will find much to stimulate and interest themselves in these pages.

After Professor Walsh's preface, Moses Rischin, correctly identified as an outstanding authority on ethnic origins and their influence, introduces the collection with a thoughtful treatment entitled "The Classical Ethnic." There follows a shrewd analysis of the "Irish in Early San Francisco" by Walsh, whose other two essays are entitled "Peter C. Yorke, San Francisco's Irishman Reconsidered" and "Machine Politics, Reform and San Francisco." Some of the author's observations and reflections here enter into the field of courteous disagreement, and the readers of the Walsh essays will disagree, perhaps, with some of his conclusions and opinions. This will be all to the good, of course. Many who read will be possessed, presumably, of their own views and prejudices, and stimulating dialogue could well result. What more could one hope for?

Other treatments included in these pages are William A. Bullough's "Chris Buckley and San Francisco: the Man and His City," and John Riordan's flattering appreciation of the role played by the prominent lawyer Garret McNerney, which is subtitled "The Pursuit of Success." Following is Roger Lotchin's "John Francis Neylan: San Francisco Irish Progressive." Going somewhat farther away than the local scene is George A. Colburn's "Father Coughlin and American Foreign Policy: an Irishman's Quest for Revenge." The reaction of local Irish to Coughlin is discussed herein. Of particular interest to this reviewer is Kevin Starr's close-in

analysis called "Jerry Brown: the Governor as Zen Jesuit." Starr's comments are far from the superficial, and, although written while Brown was still in the first year of his state rule, they contain some shrewd comments in support of the Starr contention that the four years spent by Brown as a Jesuit seminarian have had an effect upon the thinking and actions of the governor. The volume concludes with a well-written commentary by Seamus Breatnach entitled "The Difference Remains."

The San Francisco Irish is the kind of a book which one would try to read in one or two sittings with peril. So much is covered that time is needed to appreciate what is being contributed. It may perhaps be allowed to mention that the book would have been helped by a more careful proofreading, although of course typos invade many printed works. It is a distinct pleasure to record that the pages under review should always remain as a solid and therefore worthwhile contribution to the ethnic story in San Francisco.

All the photographs are from the CHS Library.

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By Gary Kurutz, *Library Director*

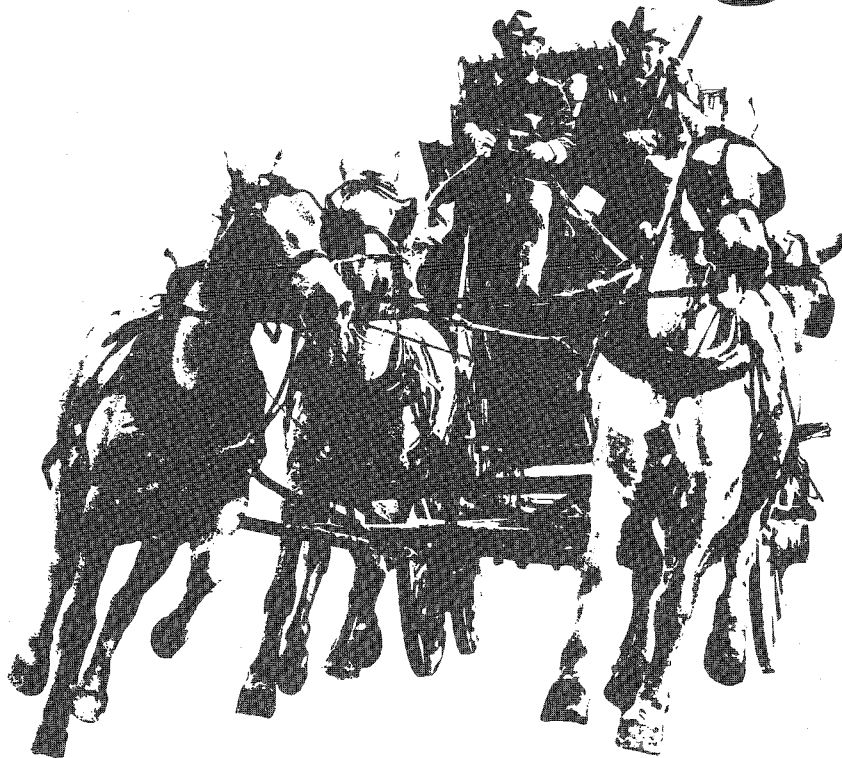
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- Bannon, John Francis. *Herbert Eugene Bolton: the historian and the man, 1870-1953*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1978. 396 pp. Publisher, P. O. Box 3398, Tucson, Arizona 85722. Cloth, \$15.00. Paper, \$8.95.
- Barrett, J. William (ed.) *The overland journal of Amos Piatt Josselyn*. Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1978. Mail orders to: Josselyn Journal, 1942 Euclid Ave., Zanesville, Ohio 43701. \$8.50.
- Bray, Hazel. *The potter's art in California, 1880-1955*. Oakland: Oakland Museum Association, 1978. Publisher, 1000 Oak St., Oakland 94607. No price listed.
- Carlson, Helen S. *Nevada place names: a geographical dictionary*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1978. Publisher, Reno, Nevada 89507. \$15.00.
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- Gleason, Duncan and Dorothy (compilers). *Beloved sister: the letters of James Henry Gleason, 1841 to 1859 from Alata, California and the Sandwich Islands*. Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1978. 226 pp. Publisher, Box 230, Glendale 91209. \$15.00.
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- Gumina, Deanna Paoli. *The Italians of San Francisco, 1850-1930*. Staten Island, New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1978. Publisher, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, New York 10304. \$7.95.
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- Wollenberg, Charles M. *All deliberate speed: segregation and exclusion in California schools, 1855-1975* (Paper ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. 204 pp. \$3.50.

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